Joker relents; Senate to probe Fraport, Palace 'deal'

Story on PAGE A2

'Chedeng' dumps rains over Luzon

EXPECT moderate to heavy rains in Luzon for the rest of the week. More heavy traffic, too, in Metro Manila.

Tropical storm "Chedeng," with gusts of up to 90 kph, yesterday bore down on the northwest coast of Luzon, dumping monsoon rains that tied up traffic on the North Luzon Expressway.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geo-

'CHEDENG'/A15

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

4 Filipino seamen killed in ship fire

By Blanche S. Rivera

ALL four fatalities in the fire that hit a Norwegian-registered cruise liner while it was docked in Miami, Florida, on Sunday were Filipino seafarers, according to their Manila-based recruitment agency.

Aurita Melanco, assistant manager for crewing administration of the CF Sharp Group of Companies, said the agency im-

4 FILIPINO/ A6

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph
Tuesday, May 27, 2003 ★★ 44 pages / 4 sections / vol. 18 / no. 168 P15
website: www.inq7.net

'Another black eye in maritime safety'

GMA gives probers of sea mishap 15 days

By Dona Pazzibugan, Luige del Puerto and Connie E. Fernandez

CALLING the latest sea tragedy "another black eye in maritime safety," a furious President Macapagal-Arroyo ordered maritime authorities yesterday to "pinpoint responsibility and mete out the necessary sanction."

She told them to submit within 15 days a complete report on the collision on Sunday morning between two passenger ferries in Manila Bay that left 25 people dead—all passengers of the MV San Nicolas.

Following the President's order, a Board of Marine Inquiry headed by Commodore Damian Carlos was formed to investigate the sea tragedy.

Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza gave the board one week to finish its probe. "We should look at the bottom of this and determine who should be held liable," he said in a statement.

At Coast Guard headquarters on Sunday night where she condoled with survivors and families of the victims, the President said "heads will roll." She was furious that the manifest of the San Nicolas did not reflect all its passengers.

"The collision annoys me," the President said at the signing of the Anti-Trafficking of Persons law in Malacañang.

"These perennial accidents can and must be stopped."

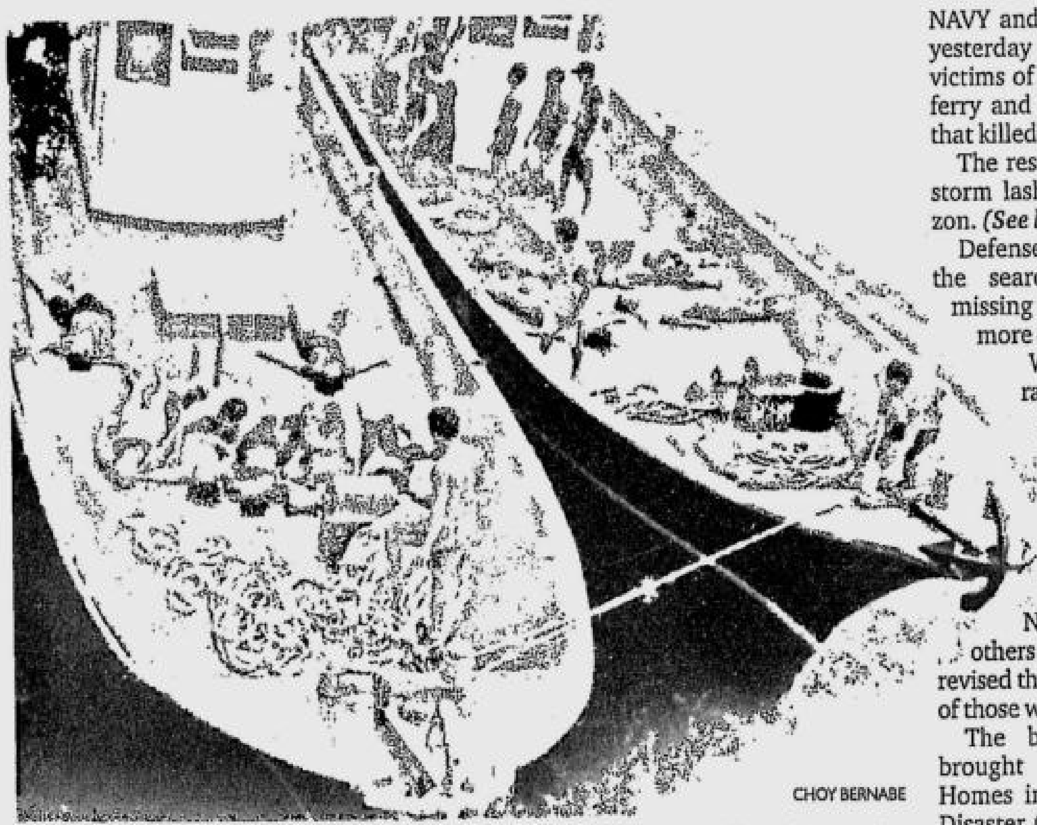
Ms Macapagal agreed to certify as urgent three Senate bills that aim to institute reforms in maritime disaster prevention and management, according to Senate President Franklin Drilon. These measures are the proposed Maritime Administration Act of 2001, the Maritime Code of the Philippines, and the National Transportation Safety Act of 2002.

"With the enactment of these bills, we hope to resolve the confusion caused by the overlapping of functions and responsibilities among the different government agencies involved in maritime safety and avoid maritime tragedies," Drilon said in a letter to the President.

ANOTHER/ A15

HELPING HAND. President Macapagal comforts a young survivor who was among the passengers of the ill-fated MV San Nicolas. At least 25 people drowned when the vessel collided with the Super Ferry 12 off Cavite on Sunday. RANDY HORMILLOSA

Search for collision victims called off



CHOY BERNABE

BODIES of passengers of the MV San Nicolas are taken on a Coast Guard boat for transfer to a Philippine Navy ship during rescue operations near Corregidor Island.

NAVY and Coast Guard ships called off yesterday the search for any remaining victims of a collision between a wooden ferry and a steel-hulled passenger ship that killed at least 25 people.

The rescue effort was hampered by a storm lashing the western coast of Luzon. *(See banner story.)*

Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes said the search-and-rescue operation for missing passengers might take three more days.

With strong winds and heavy rain battering the scene, rescuers gave up hope yesterday that more survivors would be found.

Official tally by the Coast Guard showed that 25 people had died (not 28 as earlier reported by the Philippine Navy) in the accident and 182 others had been rescued. Authorities revised the figure after learning that three of those who died were tallied twice.

The bodies of the victims were brought to the Ambassador Funeral Homes in Caloocan City. The National Disaster Coordinating Council said yesterday it was set to release P10,000 in as-

SEARCH/ A15

MARILOU Santillan shows photos of her child Angela Marie, whom she had handed to an unidentified man while escaping from the sinking MV San Nicolas. ERIK ARAZAS

Survivors' tales raise hopes for missing kin

By Luige del Puerto and Tina Santos

FIVE-MONTH-OLD Gaylyn Dimaano spent three hours in the water with her mother Genevive before search and rescue teams picked them up the other day.

It took another three hours before the family could be reunited with another daughter, 7-year-old PG Stephanie, whom Genevive had believed was dead.

Their story inspired many others to believe that their loved ones were well and on their way home.

The mother and daughter were among the last of the survivors to arrive at Coast Guard headquarters in Manila on Sunday afternoon.

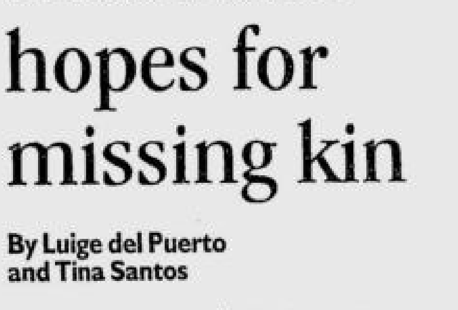
"I last saw Stephanie when the three of us jumped off. I made sure she had a life jacket. I held her hand, but lost her in the waters," Genevive told the INQUIRER.

Since then, she had been crying, she said. "I held Gaylyn close to me when we were floating, but all the time I was thinking of Stephanie," the mother said.

Genevive was still disconsolate even as she finally set foot on solid ground.

A few hours before, Genevive's husband, Boyet Dimaano, had been waiting and praying for his family.

SURVIVORS/ A16



GAWING EVERYDAY ANG PARANGAL PARA LUMINIS!

Marcos Day bill approved by House body

By Volt Contreras

WHAT'S next? The return of the New Society?

A close ally of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos has filed a bill in Congress declaring Sept. 11—Marcos' birthday— "President Ferdinand Edralin Marcos Day."

House Bill No. 5147 was among the seven measures designating local holidays that the House committee on revision of laws approved

MARCOS DAY/ A15

GMA inks tough anti-trafficking law

By John Nery and Michael Cucio
PDI Research

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday signed into law the tough Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act that widens the scope of both human trafficking and prostitution.

Among other innovations, Republic Act No. 9208 criminalizes the recruitment of minors "to engage in armed activities in the Philippines or abroad"—an unmistakable reference to the alleged presence of underage fighters in the ranks of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

It also arms the government in its campaign against illegal recruitment, because it includes "sexual exploitation, forced labor, slavery, involuntary servitude or debt bondage" as among the illegal purposes that render the recruitment of a worker unlawful.

The new law also effectively removes the gender bias in existing laws—principally the Revised Penal Code and a presidential decree—covering prostitution. Where previously "prostitutes" were defined as "women who habitually engage" in sex or lascivious conduct "for money or profit," the new law uses "person."

A provision in a key section may also prove controversial: It appears to criminalize the act of engaging the services of a prostitute. Under the Revised Penal Code, as amended, criminal liability in the act of prostitution is borne only by the prostitute and the "procurer" (the pimp or brothel owner).

But section 4(e) of the new law provides that anyone proven "to maintain or hire a person to engage in prostitution or pornography" was also liable.

RA 9208 also effectively enshrines the concept behind deposed President Joseph Estrada's Executive Order No.

GMA INKS/ A6

Loi in Palace: Discomfort amid familiarity

By Dona Pazzibugan

ANYWHERE else but here.

Ex-first lady Luisa Ejercito-Estrada yesterday set foot in Malacañang for the first time since her husband was ousted more than two years ago.

But her discomfort at being back in the Palace that she and then President Joseph Estrada had fled in January 2001 was obvious.

The first-term opposition senator was in Malacañang to witness the signing of the new anti-trafficking law, of

LOI/ A6

Cops link top bomber to al-Qaida

A DAY after his capture at Lumbia Airport in Cagayan de Oro City, Saifulla Yunos no longer wears bandages to cover his face.

Even so, the wanted Moro rebel, who uses the aliases Muklis Yunos and Alex Soriano, remained shrouded in mystery yesterday after authorities refused to present him to the media as they had done in the past with suspected bombers.

Officials on Monday described Yunos as a bomb expert who had trained at an al-Qaida camp in Afghanistan. His bombing skills and extensive contacts had made him one of the country's most wanted rebels and a key player in the shadowy world of Southeast Asian terrorists.

Officials said Yunos headed the sepa-

COPS/ A15

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The western sections of Northern and Central Luzon will experience stormy weather and the coastal waters will be rough. While the rest of Northern and Central Luzon will have rains and occasional gusty winds.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/05/27/03

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONTPAGE

Metro Manila	Monsoon Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Stormy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Monsoon Rains	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Monsoon Rains	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Monsoon Rains	Davao	Partly Cloudy

Meralco targets Nov. for part 2 of refund

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE MANILA Electric Co. yesterday proposed to the Energy Regulatory Commission a plan for the second phase of its program of refunding overcharges to customers as ordered by the Supreme Court.

Meralco said it would start the second phase of its refund plan in November, covering customers who consume between 101 and 200 kilowatt-hours a month, an exercise that would extend into next year and cost the utility giant P2.7 billion.

The first phase of the refund plan, to start on June 3, covers customers using only up to 100 kWh a month.

ERC chair Manuel Sanchez had said in an earlier interview that the ERC preferred that the second phase of the refund program be started soon after the first phase.

Meralco president Jesus Francisco said in a telephone interview that the proposal was based on certain assumptions about the company's cash flow.

"We have financial commitments within the year and this would affect our ability (to pay the refund)," Francisco said.

Meralco is facing some P11 billion in loan interest and principal payments due in July, September and October.

Francisco said it was unlikely Meralco's creditors would agree to the loans being restructured, until after the ERC acts on its petition to increase electric rates.

The ERC gave Meralco an overall average rate increase of five centavos per kWh in March, but the firm has asked for a reconsideration. It wants an average rate hike of P1.12 per kWh.

"We agreed (in yesterday's meeting) that we would submit to the ERC data on our cash flow so that it could appreciate why we are submitting such a proposal," Francisco said.

3rd, 4th phases

He said Meralco has also proposed how it intends to implement a third and fourth phase of the refund covering "the rest of residential customers and all commercial and industrial customers," respectively.

"We could even have sub-phases for the bulk users because the amount involved is big," Francisco said.

Meantime, the militant Anakpawis group of urban and rural poor said they were ready to go all the way to the Supreme Court if the ERC and Meralco refuse their demand for an immediate and lump-sum cash refund to all residential consumers.

In a statement, Anakpawis chair Rafael Mariano blasted the ERC for allowing Meralco to present its proposals that "negate the high court's order for immediate refund of cash or credit to Meralco's billing statements."

Merry-go-round

"The ERC and Meralco have been treating consumers with perpetual corporate alibis and an endless merry-go-round," Mariano said.

"This should be stopped and customers should be allowed to get back what was stolen from them," he said.

A consumer group, meanwhile, said electric consumers would be shouldering 95 centavos per kWh of a power supply that Meralco would not be buying from the National Power Corp., as a result of an agreement between Napocor and Meralco.

Pete Ilagan, president of the National Association of Electricity Consumers for Reforms (Nasecore), said the two power companies reached a settlement last month where Meralco would pay Napocor P20 billion in fines in return for being allowed to buy less than a previously agreed amount of power from the state-owned company each month.

Napocor said Meralco owes it P28 billion in fines for not buying at least 3,600 megawatts of electricity a month, based on a 10-year contract for the sale of power. The contract is good until 2004.

Meralco claimed, on the other hand, that Napocor owed it at least P8 billion for delays in transmission services and in the turnover of directly connected customers.

"According to ERC records, Napocor's current generation cost is P2.46 per kWh," Ilagan said.

"Allowing Napocor to sell to Meralco at P1.51 per kWh means burdening non-Meralco customers with 95 centavos per kWh that they did not use," he said.

He said that if Meralco's off-take was less than 3,600 mW in a certain month, Napocor would charge only P1.51 per kWh. The difference would be passed on to other Napocor customers, he said.

"This highlights the policy and regulatory failures of the government and the questionable self-dealing of the Meralco management," he said.

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Joker relents; Senate body to probe Fraport, Palace 'deal'

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE IMPASSE over Sen. Joker P. Arroyo's adamant stand against investigating allegations that a Malacañang-connected lawyer had tried to extort P3 billion from Fraport AG has finally ended.

Arroyo announced during yesterday's opening session that his blue ribbon committee would finally "open an investigation" into the matter.

Without admitting that he had buckled to pressure from the minority bloc, Arroyo said: "Consistent with my letter to Sen. (Edgardo) Angara dated May 23 . . . I restated that we are open to having the hearing on this matter provided that the evidence is not the illegal wiretaps."

He said his decision was "consistent with Section 8 of the Senate rules governing investigation in aid of legislation."

Arroyo was prevailed upon by other senators to accede to the minority's demand to open an inquiry after Angara agreed to present evidence independent of the taped conversation.

"I had a private talk with Senator Angara during the recess, and he agreed that he will submit the names of his witnesses to the committee. I think we have agreed on that," Arroyo said.

Senate President Franklin Drilon said the blue ribbon committee would call a meeting soon on how to go about the inquiry.

Arroyo's decision came after Angara delivered a privileged speech denouncing him for confusing the issue.

Even before yesterday's session started, the minority senators had harsh words to say about their majority colleagues.

Different things

In his speech, Angara said Arroyo was confusing two different things: jurisdiction and admissibility.

He said it was a gross misunderstanding, "because evidence may not be admissible, but you will never know whether that evidence will be presented unless you initiate an investigation," he said.

After Angara, Arroyo took the floor on a question of privilege, but his speech was cut short when one of the television cameras recording the Senate proceedings broke down.

With smoke coming out of the control room at the back of the session hall, Arroyo stopped his speech.

He resumed after about 20 minutes and surprised Senate reporters when he announced that he had agreed to open an inquiry.

Meanwhile, lawyer Liwayway Vinzons-Chato claimed yesterday that the taped conversation between an alleged Palace aide and American lawyers of Fraport was authentic.

Chato said she was willing to testify before the blue ribbon committee on the matter.

Chato made the claim in an affidavit which she said she executed as the legal counsel of the People's AirCargo & Warehousing Co. Inc. (Paircargo), which owns shares of stock in Philippine International Air Terminals Co. (Piatco), the builder of Naia Terminal 3.

No doubt

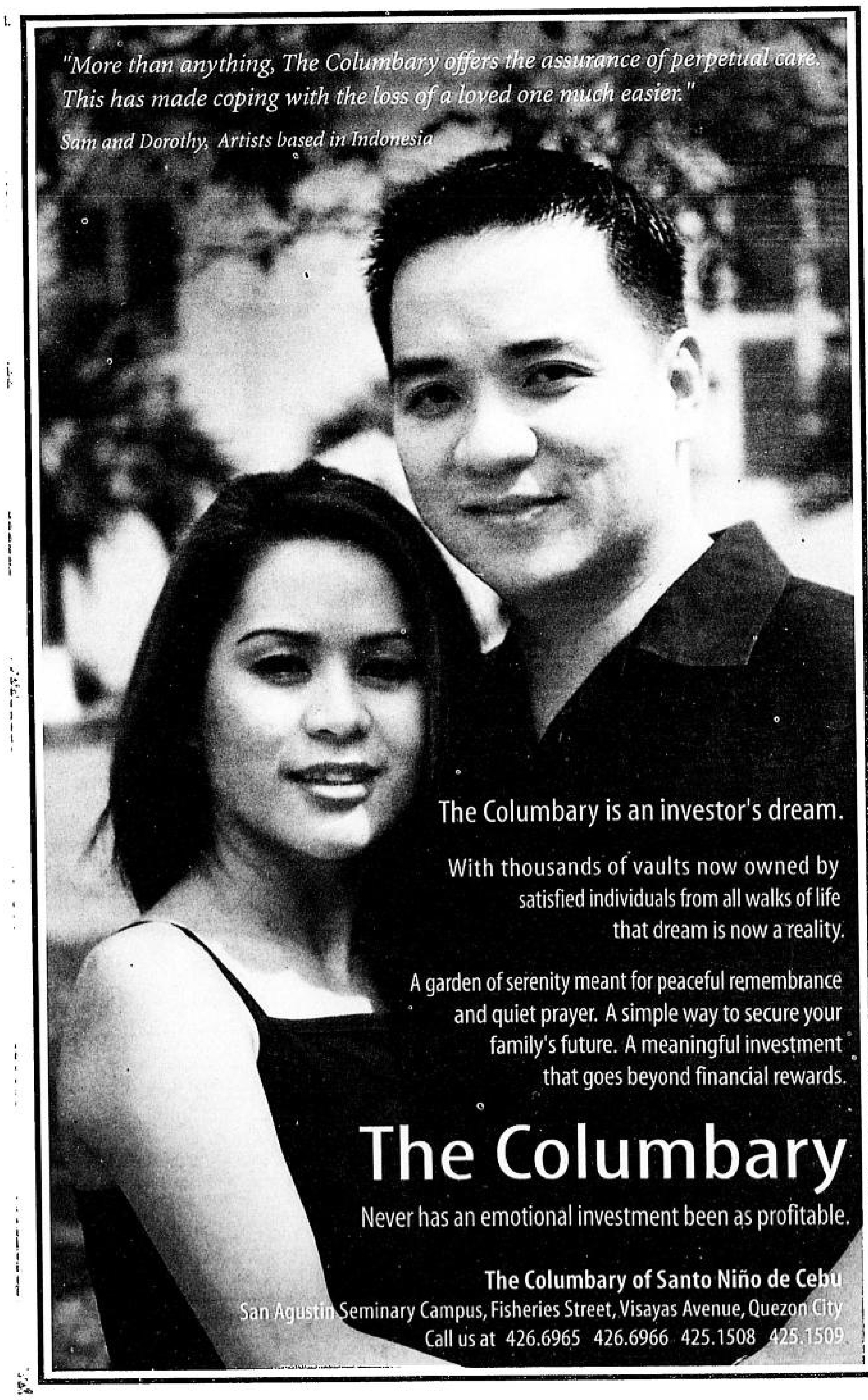
In the affidavit, Chato said the recorded voices belonged to Fraport official Peter Henkel and Fraport lawyer Dietrich Stiller.

"I have met with them several times, and both of their voices are very distinct. There is no doubt in my mind that it was Henkel and Stiller talking," said Chato, who heard the tape when it was played over the radio.

The taped conversation purportedly concerned a meeting between Paircargo and the Fraport representatives, she said in the affidavit.

During the meeting, the Fraport representatives, who had met with government officials, "made certain admissions and pronouncements," Chato said in the affidavit.

She said the Senate should open an inquiry despite the debate on the admissibility of the tapes as evidence because the "integrity of the highest officials of the land are at stake."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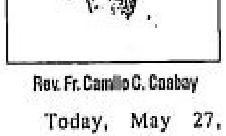
Rev. Fr. Camilo C. Caabay

Today, May 27, 2003, marks the Silver Sacerdotal Ordination Anniversary of Rev. Fr. Camilo C. Caabay, ordained to the order of the Sacred Priesthood on May 27, 1978 at the Immaculate Conception Cathedral, Puerto Princesa City, Palawan by the Most Rev. Gregorio Espiga, DD, OAR (+).

Born on August 19, 1953 in Agutaya, Palawan to Meliton Caabay (+) and Eustaquia Cabanes both of Agutaya, Father Cami as he is fondly called, was the only one among the 27 aspirants who was finally ordained priest, thus fulfilling the biblical passage that "many are called but few are chosen."

Since 1978, he had been assigned to six parishes - 3 in Northern Palawan and 3 in Southern Palawan. He was also assigned as Prefect of Discipline of the Seminario de San Jose, Puerto Princesa City and as Director of the St. Augustine Academy in Coron, Palawan.

Now on his present assignment as Parish Rector of the Immaculate Conception Cathedral Parish, he is being feted as a "Silver Jubilarian" by parishioners from far north, south and central parishes of the Province of Palawan.

The entire clergy and parishioners of the Vicariates of Puerto Princesa and Taytay join Fr. Cami in thanksgiving for 25 years of fruitful sacerdotal service even as they join him in prayer for a more dynamic priestly service in the vineyard of the Lord.

ADVT

GMA cites benefits of siding with US

By Carlito Pablo

THE PHILIPPINES will be playing a strategic role in Asia and "in the global stage" after President Macapagal-Arroyo's successful state visit to the United States last week, the President said in a report on her trip yesterday.

Ms Macapagal said she and US President George W. Bush have "articulated a new partnership" that includes a vision of the strategic role of the Philippines in the world.

The President was speaking in Malacañang after she signed into law Republic Act No. 9208, or the Anti-Trafficking of Persons Act of 2003.

Ms Macapagal had placed the Philippines squarely on the side of the US-led coalition that invaded Iraq and she was also one of the first heads of government to lend support to the international war against terrorism following the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in America.

Her popularity rating suffered because of her support for the US-led war against Iraq.

In her remarks, the President said the success of her state visit was "about recognizing that moral choices must be backed up in day-to-day life by unified action, sustained vigor and effective prosecution."

"We've shown to the world that the Filipino is not confused between terrorism and demand for justice because we can distinguish between naked hate and justified grievance," the President said.

The President said the Filipino people should be "congratulating themselves" as the "honors and courtesies accorded to our Philippine delegation were extraordinary and special."

"I would like to report to our people that America has been generous with our political needs and America has also been warm and wise in honoring the uniqueness and humanity of our nation," she said.

In an official statement, Malacañang said the package of bilateral cooperation in areas like defense and security, poverty alleviation, economic development, financing assistance from multilateral institutions, as well as pledges of new investments, obtained during Ms Macapagal's US visit was "worth some $4.09 billion."

"This was indeed beyond the expectations of the Philippine government," the Palace statement said.

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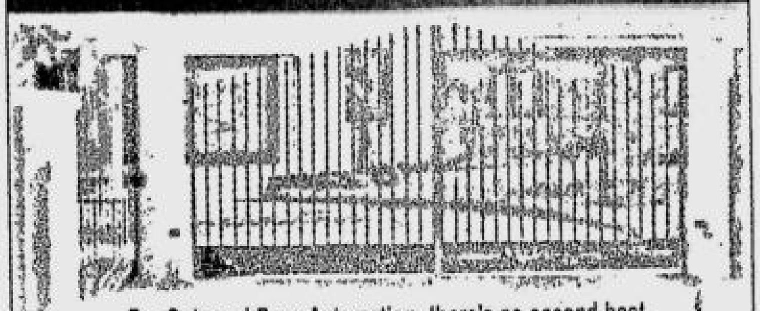

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BIOGESIC FEVERWATCH

FEVER MANAGEMENT IN THE TIME OF PNEUMONIA

What Is Pneumonia?
Pneumonia is a disease that occurs when the lungs get inflamed, usually due to infection. It's a more common problem than most people think. Usually it's a mild disease, but some forms are very dangerous and require a consultation with a doctor. An example is the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome or SARS, whose cause and cure have yet to be discovered. About 30 different kinds of germs infect the lungs and cause pneumonia. Infected lungs leak fluids and shed dead cells. This material clogs up air sacs and makes it hard for the lungs to do their job of getting oxygen into the blood. Without enough oxygen, none of the cells in your body work as they should.

Pneumonia can affect just one section of the lung or many sections of the lung. When both lungs are affected, it's called double pneumonia. Pneumonia generally lasts about two weeks. But it may take a month or more for the infected lung or lungs to clear up. Thus, when recovering from pneumonia, even healthy people may feel tired or weak.

Causes
Viruses cause about half of all cases of pneumonia. Bacteria are the most common cause of pneumonia in adults over the age of 30. Fungi can also cause pneumonia. Many of these germs are all around us. They usually can't get past a healthy person's natural defenses. That's why pneumonia is most common in elderly people, in cigarette smokers, in alcoholics, and in people suffering from other diseases such as the flu.

Symptoms
- Viral pneumonia usually comes with a combination of low fever and chills, muscle aches, fatigue, enlarged lymph nodes in the neck, chest pain, sore throat, and coughing. The cough generally brings up only a small amount of mucus.
- Bacterial pneumonia usually comes with a combination of high fever, cough with thick greenish or rust-colored mucus, shortness of breath, rapid breathing, sharp chest pain that is worse with deep breaths, abdominal pain, and severe fatigue. There can be profuse sweating and mental confusion.
- In children, labored and rapid breathing (more than 45 breaths a minute); sudden onset of fever; cough; wheezing; and bluish skin, lips, or fingertips are general signs of pneumonia.
- Mycoplasma pneumonia is often very benign and resolves without any treatment. Symptoms can consist of violent attacks of coughing that bring up only a small amount of mucus. There are chills and fever; some people get nausea or vomiting. Some patients become very weak for up to a month.

Fever as a symptom and why it should be managed at the onset

> *"Fever as a symptom of pneumonia should always be managed at the onset"*

Fever is a common symptom among the kinds of pneumonia. That's because fever is, by itself, the body's warning signal that there is an infection. It is very important that fever not be ignored so that a disease, whether pneumonia or not, can be detected and further complications be avoided. In the case of pneumonia, the best thing to do is to manage your fever at the first sign.

Managing Fever at the Onset
Whether it's mild or high, you should take Paracetamol like Biogesic to help alleviate your suffering from fever. Drink plenty of fluids and avoid physical and mental stress. It is also advisable to dress in light clothing so that you feel comfortable and your temperature can stabilize. After managing your fever, this does not mean that the rest of the symptoms should be taken lightly.

When to consult a doctor
- Your symptoms indicate you have any form of pneumonia. In many instances, you need immediate treatment to recover and avoid complications.
- Your sharp chest pain does not get better with prescribed treatment; you have increased shortness of breath; or your fingernails, toenails, or skin becomes dark or develop a bluish tinge after diagnosis. Your lungs are not getting enough oxygen and you need medical assistance.
- You cough up blood; you may need additional treatment for a worsening infection.

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AN OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO:

Kill the "FARMLAND AS COLLATERAL" BILL before it kills Agrarian Reform

We, peasant organizations, non-government organizations and agrarian reform advocates, call on the President to withdraw her support for the passage of the "Farmland as Collateral" bills pending in Congress (HB No. 5511 and SB No. 2553).

While we share the President's concern over providing agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) access to credit, we do not agree that the legislative proposals will address such issue and truly empower the ARBs.

On the contrary, the aforementioned bills are anti-farmer and anti-agrarian reform. If enacted into law, these bills will kill the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP), which aims to ensure equitable distribution and access to land and to empower farmers to realize gains from their equity. We wish to stress that:

(1)Lifting the 10-year limit for the transferability of Emancipation Patents (EPs) and Certificate of Land Ownership Awards (CLOAs) as proposed in the bills would expose farmers to pressure to sell their land for much-needed cash. Ten years is the timeframe necessary for government to provide support services and for the ARBs to become viable producers.

(2)Lifting the retention limit for ownership of agricultural lands as proposed in the Senate version would result in reconsolidation of lands in the hands of a few. Even worse, the reconsolidated landholdings would be exempted from redistribution under CARP.

(3)The bills strengthen and legitimize usurious lenders' and former landlords' claim over mortgaged lands because most farmers are already deep in debt from past neglect and lack of credit.

(4)The proposed bills do not guarantee that commercial lenders will extend credit to ARBs. In fact, the banking sector is not inclined to lend to farmer beneficiaries because (a) the risk is unacceptably high, and, (b) most banks are not institutionally prepared to engage in such lending.

(5)The bills will also cause the privatization of support services. The State is practically abandoning its mandate and social justice obligation to deliver support services to ARBs.

Thus, the claim that the "Farmland as Collateral" bills will open up to ARBs access to credit is a hoax — a reversal of the letter and spirit of agrarian reform cleverly disguised as farmer empowerment. If enacted, these would fuel agrarian unrest and insurgency.

We urge Her Excellency to implement **a genuine credit and empowerment program that would not require EPs and CLOAs as collateral and that would not put at risk the ARBs' ownership of lands awarded to them.**

We ask the President to dialogue with us so that we may explain further our opposition to the bills and alternative proposals.

Finally, we appeal to the President to boldly take on the legacy of her father, Diosdado Macapagal, and ensure the completion of CARP. It would truly be a tragedy if the death of agrarian reform in the Philippines would be by the hand of a Macapagal.

Peoples' Organizations: Aniban ng mga Manggagawa sa Agrikultura **(AMA)** · Alyansa ng mga Magsasaka sa Kanlurang Batangas **(AMKB)** · Araceli-Abong Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Organization · Araceli-Vito Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Organization · Bugabar Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Association **(BARBA)** · Buklod ng Malayang Magbubukid **(BUKLOD)** · Crossing Bulanon Agrarian Reform Cooperative **(CROBARC)** · Crossing Plaridel Agrarian Reform Cooperative **(CPARC)** · Candelaria Workers' Association **(CWA)** · Caridad Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Association **(CARBA)** · Hacienda Chloe Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Organization · Concepcion Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Association · Hacieda De Fuego Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Organization · Bgy. Plaridel Agrarian Reform Cooperative **(BPARC)** · Dos Hermanos Workers' Association **(DHWA)** · Demokratikong Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas-Pagkakaisa para sa Tunay na Repormang Agraryo sa Gitnang Luzon **(DKMP-PARAGOS)** · Elvira Multipurpose Cooperative **(ELMULPCO)** · Ester 1, 2, 3 Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Association **(EARBA)** · Gina Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Organization **(GARBO)** · Gloria-Abong Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Organization · Hulbo Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Association **(HARBA)** · Hacienda Velez Malaga Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Organization **(HAVEMARBO)** · Kalipunan ng mga Samahan sa Kanayunan-Timog Katalugan **(KASAKA-TK)** · Kalipunan ng mga Samahang Magsasaka · **(KASAMA)** Imbang Mesa Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Association · Lanatan Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Association **(LANARBA)** · Locsin Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Association **(LARBA)** · Makabayang Alyansa ng mga Magsasaka sa Pilipinas **(MAKABAYAN)** · Marjorie Multipurpose Cooperative **(MMPC)** · Minacalao Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Association **(MARBA)** · Magsaysay Small Farmers' Cooperative **(MSFC)** · Grace Rose Mirasol Agrarian Reform Cooperative · Mulawin Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Association **(MUARBA)** · Navidad-Tagbanon Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Association **(NATARBA)** · Nelia Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Association **(NARBA)** · Nene-Barbara Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Organization · Nagkakaisang Ugnayan ng mga Maliliit na Magsasaka at Manggagawa sa Niugan **(NIUGAN)** · Nagkakaisang Nagkakaisang Magsasaka ng Gitnang Luzon **(NMGL)** · Pambansang Kilusang ng mga Samahang Magsasaka **(PAKISAMA)** · Peasant Alliance of Samar and Leyte **(PASALEY)** · Plaridel-Bulanon Agrarian Reform Cooperative **(PBARC)** · Pambansang Katipunan ng mga Magbubukid sa Pilipinas **(PKMP)** · Pambansang Katipunan ng mga Samahan sa Kanayunan **(PKSK)** · Refugio Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Organization **(RARBA)** · Rizalina Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Association **(RIZARBA)** · Roma Agri Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Association **(RAARBA)** · San Antonio Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Organization · Hacienda San Martin Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Organization · Sibulan Small Farmers' Association **(SSFA)** · Sta. Isabel Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Organization · Teresita Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Organization · Tuburan-Lunesan Agrarian Reform Cooperative · Pambansang Samahan para sa Likas-Kayang Pananakahan **(SAKAHAN)** · **Samahang Magsasaka ng 53 Ektarya ng Macabud** · Task Force Mapalad **(TFM)** · Pambansang Ugnayan ng mga Nagsasariling Lokal na Organisasyon sa Kanayunan **(UNORKA)**

Non-Government Organizations: Agrarian Justice Foundation **(AJF)** · Asian Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Asia **(AsiaDHRRA)** · Asian NGO Coalition **(ANGOC)** · Balay Alternative Legal Advocates for Development in Mindanaw **(BALAOD-Mindanaw)** · Center for Agrarian Reform, Empowerment and Transformation **(CARET)** · Institute on Church and Social Issues **(ICSI)** · Institute of Politics and Governance **(IPG)** · Kaisahan tungo sa Kaunlaran ng Kanayunan at Repormang Pansakahan **(KAISAHAN)** · People's Alternative Studies Center for Research and Education on Social Development **(PASCRES)** · Philippine Development Assistance Program **(PDAP)** · Project Development Institute **(PDI)** · Philippine Ecumenical Action for Community Empowerment **(PEACE)** · Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas **(PhilDHRRA)** · Philippine Network of Rural Development Institute **(PhilNET-RDI)** · Philippine Peasant Institute **(PPI)** · Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement **(PRRM)** · Sentro ng Alternatibong Lingap Panligal **(SALIGAN)** · Upland NGO Assistance Committee **(UNAC)**

Coalitions: Peoples' Campaign for Agrarian Reform Network **(AR Now!)** · Coconut Industry Reform Movement **(COIR)** · Freedom from Debt Coalition **(FDC)** · Food First International Action Network Philippines **(FIAN)** · Partnership for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development Services **(PARRDS)**

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Advt.

With rains, DOH bracing for outbreak of usual diseases

By Armand N. Nocum and Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT of Health is bracing for outbreak of more diseases—dengue, cholera, diarrhea—which usually comes with the rainy season.

And like the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome—which remains the DOH's biggest challenge—these diseases could be kept at bay by keeping one's self healthy and the environment clean.

"Like we did during the SARS scare, we must continue with the habit of keeping ourselves healthy and our communities clean," said Dr. Maria Consorcia Quizon, head of the National Epidemiology Center.

Quizon said SARS remains on top of the list of diseases they are watching out for.

"Our first objective is to keep SARS out. We are also strengthening hospital preparedness and inspection control," she said.

The third line of defense, she said, is dealing with SARS or other diseases as they spread through the community.

In line with this, she said they are working to increase the isolation facilities of the SARS reference centers in the country.

The Asian Development Bank, meanwhile, has approved the release of $4 million in grants to combat SARS in Asia.

One grant, for $2 million, will be used to raise public awareness of the disease in the region, including the Philippines.

Suspect in Mindoro activists' slay yields

THE ARMY sergeant who went AWOL two weeks ago after he was linked to the brutal killing of two human rights activists in Oriental Mindoro has turned up at Philippine Army headquarters.

M/Sgt. Donald Caigas, head of the 204th Infantry Brigade's intelligence unit which is at the center of a justice department inquiry into the double murder, is in the custody of the Army Provost Marshal in Fort Bonifacio.

Caigas, however, failed to show up at a public hearing of the Department of Justice's Task Force Mindoro, which is investigating the killing on April 21 of Eden Marcellana, head of Karapatan-Southern Tagalog, and Eddie Gumanoy, chair of the militant farmers' group Kasama-Timog Katagalugan.

Marcellana and Gumanoy were investigating alleged cases of military abuses in Gloria, Oriental Mindoro, when they were killed. Rights groups have accused the military in the province of being behind the torture and murder of the two.

Justice Undersecretary Jose Calida, who heads the TFM, said Caigay did not show up at the hearing because his lawyer reportedly did not arrive on time.

The TFM went on with the hearing, however, questioning T/Sgt. Alex Corres, 42, and Sgt. Esperidion Martizano, 39, both members of the 204th Infantry Brigade in Oriental Mindoro. *Philip C. Tubeza*

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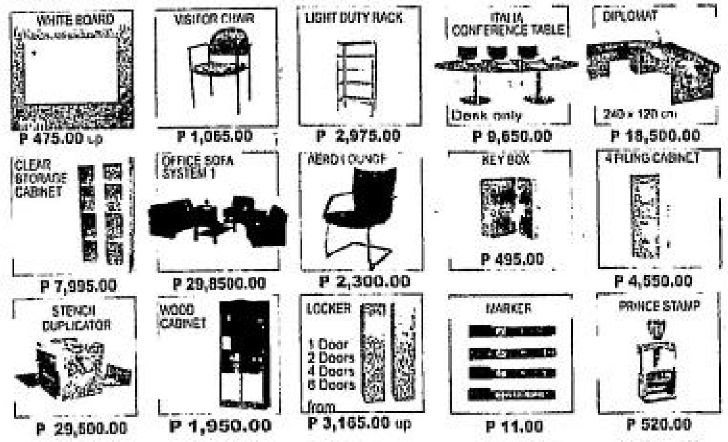

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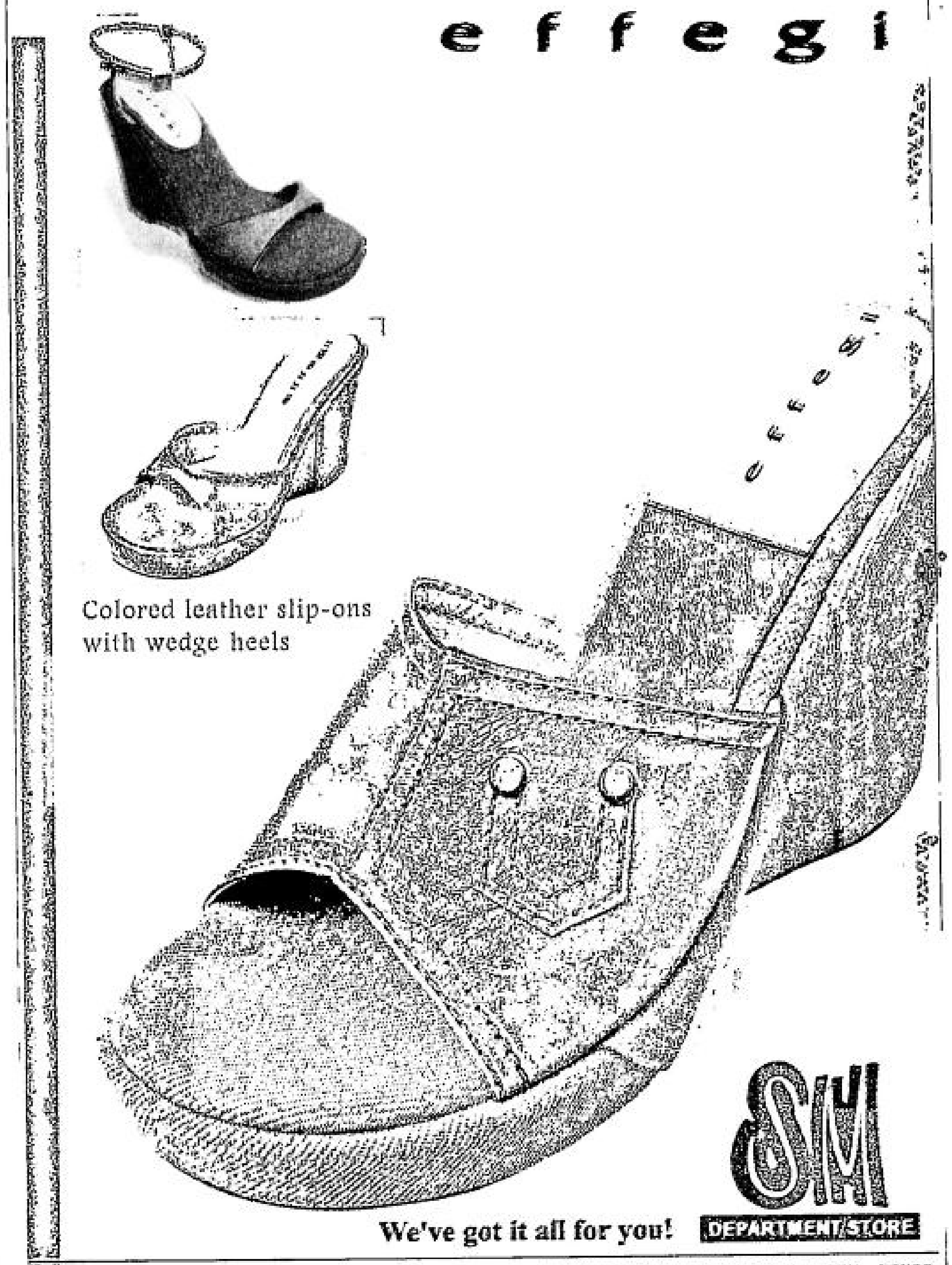

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GMA inks tough anti-trafficking law

From page A1

220 of March 2000, which created an executive council "to suppress trafficking in persons." Opposition Sen. Luisa Ejercito Estrada was one of the principal sponsors, and her staff provided the INQUIRER with a draft of the new law.

The law takes effect 15 days after it is published in full in at least two national newspapers.

Moral decision

At the Malacañang Ceremonial Hall, the President hailed the new law.

"This law represents a moral decision because trafficking of women and children is immoral," she said.

The Philippines has become a favored Asian destination of sex tourists from developed nations. The new law specifically addresses "sex tourism," which includes "sexual services and practices offered during rest and recreation periods for members of the military."

Many Filipinos seeking the proverbial greener pastures abroad have ended up victims of unscrupulous traffickers.

"This law is an affirmative action," Ms Macapagal said. "This shows that women and children have rights to unique protection that is special to them, on top of the general provision of the criminal law."

The law provides a maximum penalty of life imprisonment and a fine of up to P5 million. This maximum penalty will be applied in cases of "qualified trafficking": if the victim is a child; if he or she died or contracted AIDS; if the crime is committed by a syndicate; if the offender is related to the victim or is a member of the military or any law enforcement unit.

Any person who buys or engages the services of trafficked persons for prostitution will likewise be penalized with six months' imprisonment and a fine of up to P50,000 for first-time offenders, the statement said.

Mandatory provision

The law also strengthens measures to protect victims, including mandatory provision of emergency shelters, counseling, free legal services and skills training.

"Trafficking in women or children is immoral, even if the woman or child is paid," the President said at the signing ceremony.

"By signing this law, we will show the world and ourselves that Filipinos know the difference between free trade and exploitative trade," she said.

In another instance, she said: "We know how to keep our environment safe for women and children by protecting their welfare."

The law applies to persons of either gender.

Earlier this month, Immigration Commissioner Andrea Domingo ordered that all young Filipino women be questioned on departure from Manila, following reports that human trafficking syndicates and illegal recruiters have been using neighboring Bangkok to recruit women from the Philippines.

The women end up working without proper documents in the Middle East and Africa, and some are lured into the sex trade, Domingo said. Many of the women leave as tourists for Bangkok, where they're met by recruiters and sent to countries such as Jordan and the Ivory Coast, Domingo said. She didn't provide numbers, however.

The law also imposes tough penalties on members of media who violate the confidentiality provisions and on government employees and officials who "fail to observe the prescribed procedures" and thus allow the trafficking in persons. *With reports from Reuters, AP, AFP*

PRESIDENT Macapagal greets Sen. Luisa Ejercito-Estrada as Senate President Franklin Drilon looks on during the signing of the Anti-Trafficking of Persons Act in Malacañang. AP

Highlights of new law

- Trafficking in persons refers to the recruitment, transportation, transfer or harboring, or receipt of persons, within or across national borders, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, for the purpose of exploitation.
- Exploitation may take the form of prostitution, forced labor or services, slavery, servitude or the removal or sale of organs.
- Trafficked persons shall be recognized as victims of the act or acts of trafficking and as such shall not be penalized for crimes directly related to the acts. Therefore, the consent of a trafficked person shall be considered irrelevant.
- Trafficking is deemed committed by a syndicate if carried out by a group of three or more persons conspiring or confederating with one another. It is deemed large scale if committed against three or more persons, individually or as a group.
- An Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking is created, chaired by the secretary of justice with the secretary of social welfare as co-chair, with six government officials and three NGO representatives as members.
- The name and personal circumstances of the trafficked person or of the accused, or any other information tending to establish their identities and such circumstances or information, shall not be disclosed to the public.
- All fines imposed and the proceeds and properties forfeited and confiscated shall accrue to a trust fund to be administered and managed by the council.
- The Department of Justice will endeavor to include offenses in the trafficking in persons among extraditable offenses.

PDI Research

Loi finds discomfort in Palace

From page A1

which she was a principal sponsor.

President Macapagal-Arroyo gave her preferential treatment, but Sen. Loi Estrada was noticeably cold and perfunctory.

During the signing at the Malacañang Ceremonial Hall, Ms Macapagal brightly smiled at Loi Estrada, who was a seat away, and greeted her. (Senate President Franklin Drilon sat between them.) Senator Estrada murmured a curt reply with a tight smile.

Reading off the names of senators and congressmen who had sponsored the law, the President mentioned Loi Estrada first.

Senator Estrada did not smile during the picture-taking.

Standing behind Loi Estrada, opposition Sen. Teresa Aquino-Oreta, another principal sponsor, smiled for the cameras but pointedly did not approach Ms Macapagal. Oreta, one of the 11 senators who voted to keep the second Jose Velarde envelope sealed during the Estrada impeachment trial, is a staunch loyalist of deposed President Estrada.

Another opposition senator, Rodolfo Biazon, greeted Ms Macapagal and spoke at length with her.

Most of the congressmen also approached Ms Macapagal to greet her.

While still on the stage, Ms Macapagal tried again to elicit a warmer response from Loi Estrada.

During the congratulatory part, she extended her hand to Estrada.

The former first lady shook the offered hand, smiled tightly, then sat back unsmiling again.

Estrada tried to get off the stage as soon as her picture was taken, but a Palace aide asked her to remain seated for the rest of the picture-taking.

Nothing much

When cornered by reporters later, Estrada said the President congratulated her on the passage of the law, so she thanked her back.

Asked how she felt about the exchange, she blurted out, *"Wala* (Nothing)."

"I feel like coming to a familiar place that I don't want to remember and may be better forgotten," she said.

She said her husband, who is being tried for plunder along with their son Jinggoy, wanted to run for the presidency again in 2004.

"Coming from him, I think that's what he wants," she said.

She said she also thought Ms Macapagal would run, despite her Rizal Day promise to withdraw from the race.

"Because of what she's doing. She's all over (the place). I think she's going to run. I hope I'm wrong," Estrada said.

Though she lacked a political background, Estrada ran and won as senator in May 2001, riding mainly on her husband's mass support.

It was then that she started using Estrada, her husband's screen name.

A doctor by profession, Estrada was often overshadowed by her husband's more popular mistresses like Guia Gomez, who served as her husband's first lady when he was mayor of San Juan town, and Laarni Enriquez.

Loi Estrada was implicated in the "Juetengate" scandal, but the criminal charges were dropped before the start of the historic plunder trial.

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From page A1

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"They come home after their contracts and stay here with their families for two months, and they go back again," Melanco said.

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GMA inks tough anti-trafficking law

From page A1

220 of March 2000, which created an executive council "to suppress trafficking in persons." Opposition Sen. Luisa Ejercito Estrada was one of the principal sponsors, and her staff provided the INQUIRER with a draft of the new law.

The law takes effect 15 days after it is published in full in at least two national newspapers.

Moral decision

At the Malacañang Ceremonial Hall, the President hailed the new law.

"This law represents a moral decision because trafficking of women and children is immoral," she said.

The Philippines has become a favored Asian destination of sex tourists from developed nations. The new law specifically addresses "sex tourism," which includes "sexual services and practices offered during rest and recreation periods for members of the military."

Many Filipinos seeking the proverbial greener pastures abroad have ended up victims of unscrupulous traffickers.

"This law is an affirmative action," Ms Macapagal said. "This shows that women and children have rights to unique protection that is special to them, on top of the general provision of the criminal law."

The law provides a maximum penalty of life imprisonment and a fine of up to P5 million. This maximum penalty will be applied in cases of "qualified trafficking": if the victim is a child; if he or she died or contracted AIDS; if the crime is committed by a syndicate; if the offender is related to the victim or is a member of the military or any law enforcement unit.

Any person who buys or engages the services of trafficked persons for prostitution will likewise be penalized with six months' imprisonment and a fine of up to P50,000 for first-time offenders, the statement said.

Mandatory provision

The law also strengthens measures to protect victims, including mandatory provision of emergency shelters, counseling, free legal services and skills training.

"Trafficking in women or children is immoral, even if the woman or child is paid," the President said at the signing ceremony.

"By signing this law, we will show the world and ourselves that Filipinos know the difference between free trade and exploitative trade," she said.

In another instance, she said: "We know how to keep our environment safe for women and children by protecting their welfare."

The law applies to persons of either gender.

Earlier this month, Immigration Commissioner Andrea Domingo ordered that all young Filipino women be questioned on departure from Manila, following reports that human trafficking syndicates and illegal recruiters have been using neighboring Bangkok to recruit women from the Philippines.

The women end up working without proper documents in the Middle East and Africa, and some are lured into the sex trade, Domingo said. Many of the women leave as tourists for Bangkok, where they're met by recruiters and sent to countries such as Jordan and the Ivory Coast, Domingo said. She didn't provide numbers, however.

The law also imposes tough penalties on members of media who violate the confidentiality provisions and on government employees and officials who "fail to observe the prescribed procedures" and thus allow the trafficking in persons. *With reports from Reuters, AP, AFP*

PRESIDENT Macapagal greets Sen. Luisa Ejercito-Estrada as Senate President Franklin Drilon looks on during the signing of the Anti-Trafficking of Persons Act in Malacañang. AP

Highlights of new law

- Trafficking in persons refers to the recruitment, transportation, transfer or harboring, or receipt of persons, within or across national borders, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, for the purpose of exploitation.
- Exploitation may take the form of prostitution, forced labor or services, slavery, servitude or the removal or sale of organs.
- Trafficked persons shall be recognized as victims of the act or acts of trafficking and as such shall not be penalized for crimes directly related to the acts. Therefore, the consent of a trafficked person shall be considered irrelevant.
- Trafficking is deemed committed by a syndicate if carried out by a group of three or more persons conspiring or confederating with one another. It is deemed large scale if committed against three or more persons, individually or as a group.
- An Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking is created, chaired by the secretary of justice with the secretary of social welfare as co-chair, with six government officials and three NGO representatives as members.
- The name and personal circumstances of the trafficked person or of the accused, or any other information tending to establish their identities and such circumstances or information, shall not be disclosed to the public.
- All fines imposed and the proceeds and properties forfeited and confiscated shall accrue to a trust fund to be administered and managed by the council.
- The Department of Justice will endeavor to include offenses in the trafficking in persons among extraditable offenses.

PDI Research

Loi finds discomfort in Palace

From page A1

which she was a principal sponsor.

President Macapagal-Arroyo gave her preferential treatment, but Sen. Loi Estrada was noticeably cold and perfunctory.

During the signing at the Malacañang Ceremonial Hall, Ms Macapagal brightly smiled at Loi Estrada, who was a seat away, and greeted her. (Senate President Franklin Drilon sat between them.) Senator Estrada murmured a curt reply with a tight smile.

Reading off the names of senators and congressmen who had sponsored the law, the President mentioned Loi Estrada first.

Senator Estrada did not smile during the picture-taking.

Standing behind Loi Estrada, opposition Sen. Teresa Aquino-Oreta, another principal sponsor, smiled for the cameras but pointedly did not approach Ms Macapagal. Oreta, one of the 11 senators who voted to keep the second Jose Velarde envelope sealed during the Estrada impeachment trial, is a staunch loyalist of deposed President Estrada.

Another opposition senator, Rodolfo Biazon, greeted Ms Macapagal and spoke at length with her.

Most of the congressmen also approached Ms Macapagal to greet her.

While still on the stage, Ms Macapagal tried again to elicit a warmer response from Loi Estrada.

During the congratulatory part, she extended her hand to Estrada.

The former first lady shook the offered hand, smiled tightly, then sat back unsmiling again.

Estrada tried to get off the stage as soon as her picture was taken, but a Palace aide asked her to remain seated for the rest of the picture-taking.

Nothing much

When cornered by reporters later, Estrada said the President congratulated her on the passage of the law, so she thanked her back.

Asked how she felt about the exchange, she blurted out, "*Wala* (Nothing)."

"I feel like coming to a familiar place that I don't want to remember and may be better forgotten," she said.

She said her husband, who is being tried for plunder along with their son Jinggoy, wanted to run for the presidency again in 2004.

"Coming from him, I think that's what he wants," she said.

She said she also thought Ms Macapagal would run, despite her Rizal Day promise to withdraw from the race.

"Because of what she's doing. She's all over (the place). I think she's going to run. I hope I'm wrong," Estrada said.

Though she lacked a political background, Estrada ran and won as senator in May 2001, riding mainly on her husband's mass support.

It was then that she started using Estrada, her husband's screen name.

A doctor by profession, Estrada was often overshadowed by her husband's more popular mistresses like Guia Gomez, who served as her husband's first lady when he was mayor of San Juan town, and Laarni Enriquez.

Loi Estrada was implicated in the "Juetengate" scandal, but the criminal charges were dropped before the start of the historic plunder trial.

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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

RP bans Canadian beef

By Christine Gaylican

THE PHILIPPINES imposed a temporary ban on Canadian beef imports yesterday after confirming an outbreak of mad cow disease in that country.

The Philippines imports about a fourth of its beef requirements from Canada.

The country has not lifted its ban on similar beef imports from Europe and Japan.

Other Asian countries including Japan, South Korea and Taiwan have banned Canadian beef imports since Tuesday last week.

Based on news reports, Canada reported its first case of mad cow disease in a decade on Tuesday. A cow in Alberta, Canada's top cattle-producing province, tested positive Friday for the brain-wasting bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), commonly known as mad cow disease.

Canadian officials, however, said it was an isolated case of an 8-year-old cow in Alberta that was slaughtered on Jan. 31.

The Philippines also suspended imports of live poultry and poultry products from Texas due to an outbreak of the highly contagious Newcastle disease in the US state, the Department of Agriculture said.

The temporary ban covers the import of domestic and wild birds and their products, including day-old chicks and eggs.

Newcastle disease is a contagious and fatal viral illness for fowl but almost harmless to humans, although people working with infected birds could get mild conjunctivitis.

The US Department of Agriculture confirmed the outbreak of the virus in Texas in April. The European Union has also banned poultry imports from Texas until August.

The Philippines imports about 2,000 fighting cocks yearly from the United States, mostly from Texas. *With a Reuters report*

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Tutors can't escape poll duty

LIKE IT or not, public school teachers will have to serve as election inspectors in the 2004 polls.

Delegates to the National Voters Education Summit in Manila yesterday agreed that the teachers would still be indispensable next year, even with the acquisition by the Commission on Elections of new technology that would facilitate the counting and reporting of votes.

The Department of Education, however, continued to protest the use of teachers as election inspectors.

Education Undersecretary Jose Luis Gascon said the government should work instead to "liberate" the teachers from election service or amend the law to make their service voluntary.

But Tarlac Rep. Jesli Lapus, chair of the House committee on suffrage and electoral reforms, said the House bill amending the law requiring teachers to perform election duty has been set aside.

"Definitely in 2004, there will still be teachers (as election inspectors). It's impractical to remove teachers next year," Lapus said.

"There will be new technology that will be adopted, and we need to educate all those who will have a hand in it," he said.

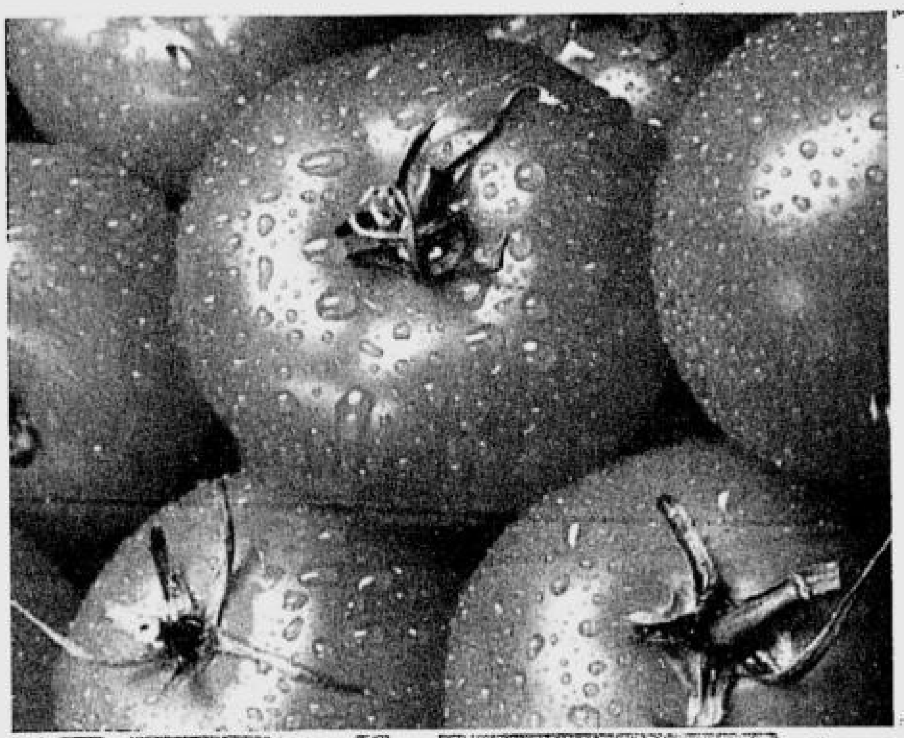
Comelec Executive Director Mamasapunod Aguam said the government would need around 780,000 teachers to serve as election inspectors in 260,000 municipalities throughout the country.

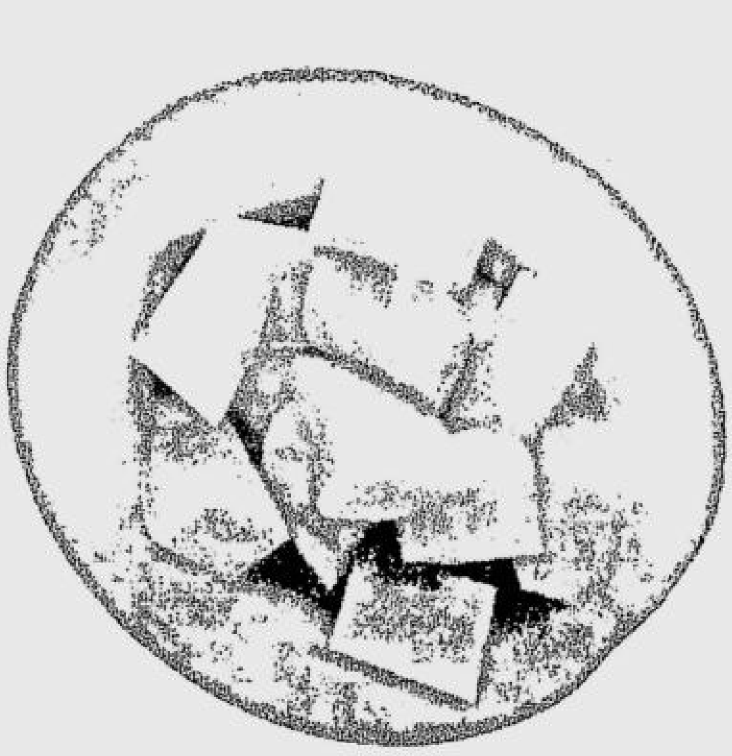
Even the National Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) said it was "not inclined" to support the teachers' lobby to be relieved of election duty.

Namfrel chair Jose Concepcion said, however, the teachers' role would be minimal since the new counting machines would do most of the work.

"All they have to do is hand out the ballots to the voters to fill up," he said.

The DepEd has backed the teachers' clamor to be freed of election duty, saying they are subjected to danger and harassment by politicians.
Blanche S. Rivera





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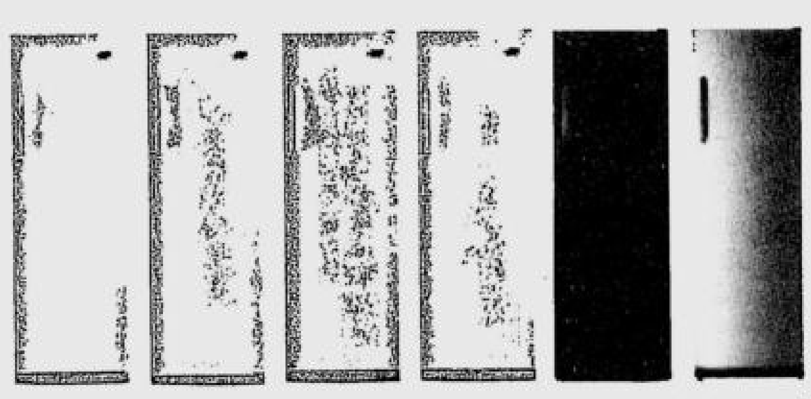

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Founding Chairman

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Return to negotiations

EDITORIAL

PRESSURE is building up on the government to return to the negotiating table with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. Foreign Secretary Blas Ople has been invited to attend the annual meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in Tehran, Iran.

While the agenda of the talks between Ople and the OIC officials has not yet been announced, it can be expected that the resumption of the peace talks will be among the items to be discussed. The OIC, through its Committee of Eight, supports peace talks between the government and the separatist Moro rebels.

But before the peace talks between the government and the MILF can be resumed, there has to be some confidence-building measures. The first of these is a halt to the latest offensive against the rebels in Mindanao. The second is the dropping of the "terrorist" tag on the MILF.

President Macapagal-Arroyo was expected to do the first yesterday during a visit to some cities in Mindanao, but her trip was called off because of inclement weather. Many believe, like opposition Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr., that the President ordered the latest military offensive on the eve of her departure for the United States to impress upon US President George W. Bush that she was tough on terrorists.

Now that the offensive against the MILF has accomplished its purpose, it is time to stop it. Already, the all-out operation has resulted in many civilian deaths and the displacement of thousands. Pimentel said 318,000 civilians have been displaced but this was disputed by Presidential Chief of Staff Roberto Tiglao, who said only 3,500 civilians were displaced. Whatever the real figure is, the fact is that civilians are among the first to be affected by the fighting between the government and MILF forces.

About two weeks ago, Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes said he was in favor of declaring the MILF a terrorist group. This was seconded by Tiglao who said that branding the MILF as a terrorist organization had become "inevitable" after the May 10 bombing in Koronadal City that killed nine people and wounded 41 others. But if the MILF is branded as a terrorist organization, how can the government conduct peace talks with it? Before peace talks can resume, the government will have to remove the "terrorist" tag on the MILF. A government does not talk peace with "terrorists"; it conducts police operations against them.

Pressure on the government to return to the negotiating table comes also from the country's influential Catholic bishops who have called for an immediate stop to the military offensive in Mindanao. The bishops said they had proof that the MILF rebels wanted to talk peace.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, in a statement signed by Archbishop Orlando Quevedo, asked both the government and the MILF "to stop all collateral damage by both sides." Quevedo also said he had received a letter from the MILF expressing willingness to talk peace.

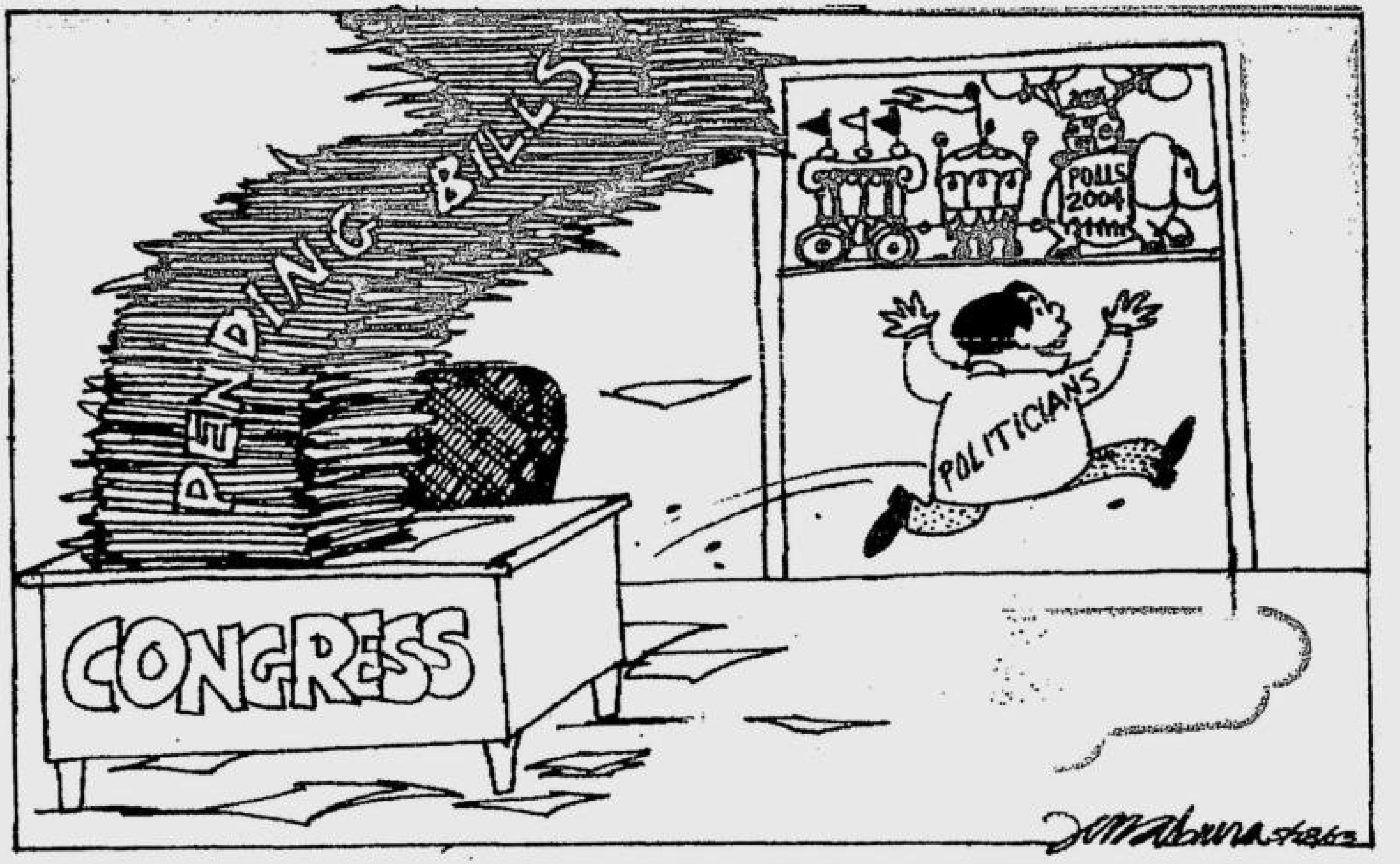
Another positive development that could lead to the government and the MILF resuming peace talks is the United States' offer to mediate between the government and the MILF. In a joint press conference with President Macapagal-Arroyo last week, President Bush had said that the United States was prepared to provide "diplomatic and financial support to the peace process" provided the MILF abandoned the path of violence.

Deputy Speaker Gerry Salapuddin of Basilan, a former commander of the MNLF, said that the MILF was accepting the mediation of a stronger country like the United States. He said this was relayed to him by Ghadzali Jaafar, the MILF vice chair for political affairs.

If both sides are amenable to the US brokering the peace talks, it could work as a partner of Malaysia in the talks. Malaysia has been very helpful in the Philippines' efforts to resolve the Mindanao conflict.

Given these developments, the circumstances appear to be favorable for the resumption of the peace talks between the government and the MILF. We hope that the President will take the necessary confidence-building measures to pave the way for a return to the negotiating table.

The country can expect economic assistance from the US as a result of the President's state visit. Some of this will be channeled to Mindanao. But social and economic development efforts, which should address some of the major concerns of the rebels, cannot take place in a climate of war. Peace has to prevail first before development and reconstruction programs can be carried out.



Congress records, too, can't be trusted

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

LIES never stop coming from the halls of Congress. Last May 24, an employee of the Senate, Eleuterio P. Sarmiento, denied in a letter to the INQUIRER that the Urban Development and Housing Act of 1992, better known as "that stupid Lina Law," was passed in the dead of night without a quorum, contrary to what I wrote in the May 12 column. He said the records of the Senate show that the bill was passed "in the afternoon of Dec. 9, 1991" and the Conference Committee Report was approved by the Senate "in the afternoon of Feb. 3, 1992."

That may be what the official records of the Senate say, but the records of both Houses of Congress are the least credible as to what time bills are passed with how many votes. The records are sometimes falsified to make it appear that a particular bill was approved legally when it actually was not. Come on, we were not born yesterday. That is standard practice in Congress. Many mysteries happen in the august halls of either House in the dying hours of a *sine die* session, when many exhausted legislators have already left. That is when controversial bills with many opposers are usually passed.

Only a few days before, last May 14, House Acting Secretary Genera Artemio Adasa denied in a similar letter to the INQUIRER a statement of Sen. Joker Arroyo that House Concurrent Resolution 16, which enjoins the Senate's concurrence for a constituent assembly to amend the Constitution, was adopted around midnight without a quorum. Adasa wrote that according to the House journal, "A roll call was called, and with 147 members present, the chair declared there was a quorum. The body subsequently adopted the resolution by a vote of 134-13."

In his letter to the editor published on May 23, Arroyo declared Adasa's statement "an unmitigated falsehood because there was no roll call vote when the House adopted Resolution No. 16. The House, presided by Speaker Jose de Venecia himself, adopted the resolution on a voice vote, not a roll call vote. This is reflected in black and white on Page 101 of House Journal No. 62."

The Journal said that "on motion of Rep. Escudero, the Chair called for a viva voce vote, and with majority voting in favor of House Concurrent Resolution No. 16, the Body adopted the same."

Arroyo said that the roll call was done at 9:05 p.m. and 147 members were present. But at 11:47 p.m. when the House voted on resolution 16, "they could have easily called the roll if the 147 members were still around. But Speaker De Venecia did not and could not call the roll (because there was no quorum). Thus, the voice vote was resorted to because the number of votes cast need not be recorded."

This trick is routine in Congress. A roll call is made before the start of a session and there is a quorum. But as the day or night wears on, the legislators disappear one by one. Late at night, when a vote is called and there is no longer a quorum, the legislators retain the charade that there is, unless somebody questions the quorum.

The presiding officer will ask: "Is there any objection?"

The few who are left are half-asleep, so naturally nobody listens, much less object.

"There being none," the presiding officer says, "the motion is approved." And the measure goes down in the records as having been approved unanimously by those who answered the roll call earlier. This is cheating, pure and simple, and rules should be adopted to stop this practice.

That is why the records of the Senate on the passage of the Lina Law as quoted by Sarmiento has very little credibility. The Daily Globe of which I was then editor in chief had followed the journey of the controversial Lina Law through the halls of Congress. During the *sine die* session of the Senate, when we expected the bill to be rammed through, I instructed our reporter to stay until adjournment and watch what happened to the bill.

He reported to me the next day: The bill was put to a vote about midnight. Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile questioned the quorum. The presiding officer called for a recess during which Enrile was persuaded to withdraw his objection. Enrile did and the bill was passed by a voice vote.

The Senate records say differently, but you can ask Enrile. And you can ask the Senate reporter; he still works as the Senate reporter of another reputable newspaper. The Daily Globe published two days later an account of the questionable passage of the bill. Neither Sarmiento nor anybody else questioned the accuracy of our story.

The Lina Law was passed illegally and should be sent back to the Senate and, if not repealed, at least amended because it has made squatting worsen a hundredfold instead of solving it as its sponsors had trumpeted then. The Lina Law will bankrupt the government but it won't solve the squatting problem. The government will run out of land but the squatting problem won't be solved. On the contrary, it has made it worse. For it rewards law breakers and encourages crime, but punished property owners and taxpayers.

Furthermore, the Lina Law is unconstitutional. It is class legislation. It was crafted and passed to benefit one class of people, the squatters, at the expense of another, the property owners.

A Makati trial court which ordered the ejectment of a squatter who used the Lina Law as a defense has already declared the law unconstitutional. But the lawyers for the squatters did not appeal the RTC decision to the Supreme Court because if the decision were affirmed, that would in effect repeal the Lina Law.

Somebody should question the law's constitutionality before the tribunal.

Forever young

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THE FIRST thing people always ask when I talk to them is how I manage to come up with a topic every day. My answer has always been to tell the story of a good friend of mine about how he learned to drink.

My friend was a copyreader for a newspaper, one of the best in the business, who toiled day in and day out to make reporters sound good or often just intelligible. Most days, he said, he found the copies, or drafts, horribly written, and he had to exert himself especially arduously to straighten them out. At the end of which, he was compelled to repair to the nearest bar to partake of liberal drafts of beer to divest himself of his aches and pains and a creeping cynicism about the world. On some days, however, my friend said, he found an excellently written copy, or draft, one that restored his faith in his profession. He was compelled to repair to the nearest bar to partake of liberal drafts of beer to celebrate.

Either way, he drank.

That, I said, not entirely jokingly, was pretty much how I write columns. Most days, I wake up to find the world isn't right. Someone somewhere has done something that can piss off a saint. So I am compelled to rattle off a few angry words, preferably with liberal drafts of wit, to exorcise the demon and hold off a creeping cynicism about the world. Some days, however, I wake up to find that someone has performed an act of grace, enough to piss off the forces of darkness, which restores my faith in humanity. I am compelled to rattle off a few euphoric words, preferably with liberal drafts of wisdom, to celebrate.

Either way, I write.

But this column isn't about column-writing, it is about aging. I remembered the story because of a comment I heard recently from someone I know. This person is into all sorts of alternative things, all designed to allow one to relieve stress or find peace of mind, whichever comes first. It's that time of year when I get all sorts of advice from people, nearly all of them unsolicited though not all of it unwanted or unneeded. Maybe he said, with genuine concern, I should be a little less angry. As one grows older, he said, one should learn to be a little more patient, to relax more, to take life with a certain distance, if not resignation. It's not just a good way to live longer, he said, it's a good way to keep younger.

I'm not so sure about that. It may be a good way to live longer, but I'm not particularly bothered about living longer or shorter. I've always thought the saying, "It's not how long it is, it's what you do with it," applies to life as well. I've pretty much gone for quality over quantity in most things, including, well, never mind. While at this, I remember that joke again about someone saying, "I don't drink, I don't smoke, I don't carouse, which is why I'm now about to celebrate my 80th birthday." A friend of his asks, "How?"

Quite apart from that, I'm not so sure not being able to dredge up the roiling lava of anger, voluntarily or involuntarily, is a sure-fire way to keep young—or "youthen," as my friend put it. I do believe it can make people **look** young, but I don't know that it can make people **be** young. There's a difference. I know a lot of people who look extremely young from taking very good care of their bodies and living a stress-free life, the latter including not indulging in the most stressful of human occupations, which is thinking and loving. They invariably like listening to retro music (their normal complaint is that today's music is loud and un-musical, the same things our parents said about our music then), and lecturing people over a [vegetarian] meal about the need to discover harmony with Nature and other human beings while being oblivious to the lack of it they are spreading around the table as they talk.

Most times, I prefer people my age who just talk about disease. There's a limit to how much retro I myself can take. I like listening to oldies now and then, but not resolutely. The world did not stop in the 1960s and 1970s, although there's a case to be made for genius ending with the Beatles. The only retro I'm really a sucker for is the one that dates back several centuries, to the three Bs.

I've always thought **not** being angry made people old before their time. I do not mean by anger the scraggly petulance that comes from being hard pressed to pay the bills after surrounding oneself with creature comforts. I do not mean by it the roaring outbursts that come from being thwarted in one's efforts to pursue success, or the chimera that goes by the name. I do not mean by it the seething frustration that comes from a need to accumulate, the kind that leads to, as the Rolling Stones shouts, no satisfaction.

I mean by anger the roiling resentment that comes from seeing children sleeping in the sidewalks while the military hogs the bulk of taxpayer's money. I mean by it the smoldering rage that comes from seeing people fleeing their homes to escape bombings and mortar fire because of some people's delusions about fighting terror and ambitions to become president again. I mean by it the seething fury that comes from patent acts of injustice to man or woman, which stokes you even to physical action.

I cannot see how that kind of anger makes one old. It can make one **look** old, it can make for gray hair and wrinkles, I'll grant that. But the heart remains young, the soul takes the sheen of morning. Being able to abide perfidy, being able to reconcile with stupidity, being assailed by injustice and learning to look the other way—those are the things that can really make you decrepit, in soul if not in body. Who wants to live long that way?

Well, this time of year the mind turns to these things. And it's raining....

MNLF case should encourage MILF to return to law

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

UPON entering Heroes Hall yesterday morning, where the President signed the bill into law penalizing the trafficking of women, and delivered her report on her state visit to the US, I noticed there weren't any chairs. I wondered if the stand-up audience was a symbol of a new bureaucratic work ethic. Perhaps the message after the US visit was "No more *pa-relak relak, trabajo lang.*" It turned out, however, that the chairs were removed because the phoned-in response to the Palace invitations was so big that there were not enough chairs.

* * *

The President slipped into town from the US very quietly at 2 o'clock Sunday morning and was supposed to rest all day. But at 11 a.m. she joined the parishioners of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish at Claret School in Quezon City for Mass. Later that day she went out to condole with the victims of the latest sea mishap to hit the country. Yesterday, after the Palace ceremony she was off to several places in Mindanao. GMA's stamina, so evident in her various political campaigns in the past, remains legendary, prompting many observers to wonder where she is headed.

I've been throwing the question of whether GMA would run or not in 2004 to House members, and yesterday I asked those present the same question. Invariably the response was, she is running, but the Cabinet members gave very vague answers. One congressman from the North opined that President Bush's visit in October will virtually seal GMA's election, adding that Eduardo Cojuangco will not run if GMA does. I tried the query on the businessmen, too, and they said they wouldn't mind having her again, but one of them thought it might be difficult to justify her turnabout.

* * *

White House state dinner tidbits:

- Reports said that some American fashion writers were fascinated by President Macapagal-Arroyo's lavender and chartreuse *terno*, a creation of Pinoy couturier JC Buendia. On the other hand, Mila Drilon and Gina de Venecia caught the attention of the other guests when they entered in their embroidered piña gowns, escorted by Marine guards. All the more when the two ladies explained that the fiber came from the pineapple plant and the embroidery was done by hand.
- Senate President Franklin Drilon related to me how President Bush has altered formal dressing: he wears his tuxedo with leather boots, like a genuine Texan. Bush's boots were decorated with "GWB" in silver at the sides and the seal of the US President below the knee. When Drilon mentioned that tidbit to the US Vice President's lady at the dinner table, she replied that her husband wears boots with his tux too. Dick Cheney is from Wyoming, another cowboy country.

* * *

One thing that should convince the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) that the Philippine government is serious about helping the MILF rehabilitate is the way the MNLF, the faction that the OIC recognizes as representative of the Moro people, is being treated. Since 1996 when the peace treaty with the MNLF was forged during the Ramos administration, MNLF members have been gradually integrated into the Armed Forces, their firearms traded for economic benefits.

This year from some 12,000 remaining MNLF forces, 5,750 MNLF soldiers are joining the AFP and 1,700 to the PNP. On June 10, 317 more MNLF followers of Nur Misuari will return to the fold of the law. Among the benefits derived from the US state visit was a fund amounting to $11.5 million for direct rehabilitation of the 12,000 MNLF members which, if used properly, would yield tremendous benefits.

* * *

Apart from the MNLF rank and file, many commanders have returned to the fold of the law and now occupy various elective posts in Muslim Mindanao. One of them is Yusop Zikiri, former MNLF chief of staff and now governor of Sulu, who was invited by the President to join her in the state visit. Another former MNLF commander is Basilan Rep. Gerry Salapuddin, now House deputy speaker for Mindanao, who brought with him 1,200 MNLF soldiers when he surrendered in 1984.

Salapuddin's story is the stuff movies are made of but also singular proof of what education can do to poor Muslim boys. The son of a Yakan farmer, Gerry had never heard of school. At the age of seven, he used to wonder where his playmates would go every morning until he followed them one day to the Tuburan Elementary School, where he insisted that he also be allowed to enroll. But he was so poor he would gather guavas and sell them to his classmates so he could buy notebooks and pencils. Right after graduating from the Basilan National High School, he joined the MNLF. Recalling that episode, he terms it an "accidental recruitment due to poverty."

* * *

In 1984, through the efforts of then Defense Undersecretary Eduardo Ermita, Salapuddin returned to the political mainstream with one demand from President Marcos: that Basilan be given a state college where poor Muslims could enroll. Marcos readily acceded and Basilan State College (BSC) was established. However, Salapuddin himself enrolled at the Western Mindanao State University in Zamboanga City, but his studies were interrupted when he was elected governor of Basilan in 1988. Determined to get a college degree, however, he enrolled at BSC and went on to work for a masteral degree. Last March BSC conferred on him an honorary doctorate in development education, and among his guests was Carolina San Luis, the principal of the high school from which he graduated.

Salapuddin, who is currently taking up his Ph.D. in political science at UP Diliman, values education so much that a "reasonable" part of his CDF goes to funding 3,000 scholarships.

Enrollment at BSC has also grown so much that he has filed a bill seeking to convert it to a university.

Weapons hunters finding 'dry holes'

NEWS ANALYSIS

Dafna Linzer

RUTBAH, IRAQ—Frustrated weapons hunters are turning away from outdated US intelligence leads, which have failed to turn up any evidence of chemical, biological or nuclear arms in Iraq after 10 weeks.

Teams are now moving toward their own intelligence gathering, based on interviews with Iraqi scientists, factory workers and even neighbors who lived near shadowy operations once run by Saddam Hussein.

The switch comes at a time of lowered expectations and increased frustration among the searchers. US President George W. Bush has said he began the war to disarm Saddam. But there has been no sign of either the ousted leader or the weapons he long denied having.

In the war's early days, American officers said they expected to find such huge stockpiles of unconventional weapons that their main concern was whether they had enough people to destroy the materials.

"It never occurred to anyone, not even for 10 seconds, that we wouldn't find any," said Capt. David Norris, who heads Mobile Exploitation Team Charlie.

The team—one of four originally assigned to analyze evidence of weapons of mass destruction—is no longer part of the search. Its criminal investigators, linguists and counterintelligence experts are now looking for evidence of crimes against humanity that Saddam's regime may have committed.

MET-C has stumbled on some documents it hopes may help investigators piece together cases against the ousted leadership.

But Norris said only a few of the 30 sites they've visited have produced results.

Two other teams are still involved with the weapons search, though no longer exclusively.

The teams had been working under the 75th Exploitation Task Force. But their work will soon fall under the Iraq Survey Group, a new Pentagon effort that will deploy in Iraq in coming weeks and take charge of investigations into everything from potential weapons to Saddam's alleged terrorist connections.

The search leaders hope intelligence tips will improve.

"The frustration level is increasing as we keep getting constant negative results," said Lt. Col. Keith Harrington, 42, who spent years in the Special Forces before joining the Pentagon.

"Intelligence needs to play a main role here," he said at the team headquarters in a windowless, concrete cabana along a man-made lake outside Baghdad.

More than a dozen officers and soldiers interviewed recently complained about the quality of information they've been given.

"The initial intelligence we got was old, and the target folders are designed more for internal analysis than site exploitation," said Col. Tim Madere, the senior officer for unconventional weapons with the Army's V Corps.

Col. John Connell, who will oversee the survey teams under the new setup, said the task force will "bring in people with the background to attack sites more comprehensively."

The original teams weren't designed to carry out the kind of detective work that UN inspectors mastered over their years in Iraq, mostly because military planners were convinced such weapons would be easily found once Saddam was gone.

But the sites expected to yield the greatest finds came up dry.

Last week, one team began interviewing nuclear physicists in their Baghdad homes. Norris' team is questioning neighbors who lived near intelligence installations. And Harrington asked his team to develop questions for site managers and other Iraqis they come across.

On Friday, Harrington's team hauled equipment aboard two Black Hawk helicopters and flew for 2½ hours across western Iraq to a suspected storage facility 250 miles (400 kilometers) from Baghdad. An undated satellite image of the site showed seven buildings along the edge of an abandoned stone quarry called Rutbah, which UN inspectors had visited.

When Harrington's team arrived, they found only three structures on the dusty property, including a shed and a small shack. Bags of mustard-colored sand were piled against the shed's back wall. "Oh, here's the yellowcake," one British soldier on the team joked, referring to a powdered form of uranium used in producing nuclear weapons.

Humor and camaraderie among team members help ease the pressures from hunting for weapons of mass destruction with the world watching. It's also a way to keep spirits up in the blistering heat that bakes soldiers day and night.

After only 30 minutes at Rutbah, Harrington deemed it a "dry hole." But on a tip from the 3rd Armored Calvary Regiment patrolling the area, he took his team to what had been described as a "suspicious-looking town."

It turned out to be a farm recently taken over by a family of shepherds. Harrington talked with the head of the household, then viewed his sheep pen, an untended field of lavender and several mangy dogs.

An hour later, his team was back on the helicopters and headed for Baghdad. It had nothing to report.

The problem was familiar to Madere, who has worked with all the search teams.

"We're trying to make the case to the higher-ups that we need more specifics," he said. *AP*

A pre-war observation on those old houses

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

MORE than half a century ago F. Perales, an architect, already noted that the old houses of Manila did not resemble any known Spanish style even if there were architectural elements that were similar. What makes his article interesting are photographs of structures in Intramuros and Binondo destroyed by the war and the culture of "erase-atechture."

Perales observed that these structures were scattered in various districts of Manila, mixed with newer buildings. With the incessant growth of the city, they were boxed in and crowded in their surroundings. There were no efforts at preservation at the time even if the *ilustrados* of those years were more Europeanized than the generation that followed them.

Although Intramuros still contained mansions with grand portals denoting the once important social status of the owner, an air of neglect and disrepair already hung like a pall over the ancient citadel. Built near churches or official centers during the Spanish period, their construction, even if luxurious with escutcheons carved on their portals, was not Spanish. For one, the upper floor was of wood, including the exterior walls that rather than being solid walls were tabiques of excellent wood such as narra, ipil, dungon and molave. These hard woods were utilized in moldings, posts, cross beams and panels that were in some cases more than a foot in thickness. In this manner they were able to resist torrential rains and a punishing sun for years even if there had been no effort to alleviate the weight that accumulated in the body through the years.

The lower floor would have resembled old Spanish houses more, with walls measuring some 80 cm thick of rubble or brick with a solidity that allowed them to support the brutal blows of earthquakes that over time had assaulted them, weakening their foundations and vigor.

Almost all the houses had these grand portals for an entrance, decorated with lateral pilasters in the Tuscan style but with local variations. These supported the cornice and the keystone if the entrance was in the form of a recessed arch or the central wedge-shaped stones used in arches if the door was straight or flat. Escutcheons were decorative—authentic if the owner had a right to a noble emblem or an imitation thereof if he hadn't.

The portals lost their vigor when the cornice and sometimes part of the capital of a column and the stem were obscured by the intense shadow projected by the overhang of the upper floor. This style for practical reasons imposed by the climate that necessitated shelter from the rain and the sun was greatly used and considered special to the Philippines.

The *zaguan* or ground floor was reached through this entrance, which gave way to the patio, reached through an arch formed by an exact semicircle that punctuated the moment of passing from the shadow of the *zaguan* to the exuberance of the tropical sunlight. There was usually no other decoration in the patio aside from a leafy tree, a well or fountain of water or usually a great profusion of flower pots with plants of many types. The contrast of the greenery with granite stones used for paving created a simple but decorative effect that, with the play of light and shadow, contributed to the agreeable sensation of coolness when you contemplated these patios.

In general the upper floors were not interesting, except for the splendid wooden floor boards, generally of narra, tindalo, molave and akle or molave and narram, alternating in clear then dark bands. These formed a show of superb hard wood in sizes unusual in wood of such excellent quality.

The carvings and decorations in exaggerated profusion Perales attributed to Chinese carpenters copying European originals, adapting them without understanding the rationale or history behind them and thus creating another style altogether that was in itself original.

Houses outside Intramuros that carried the same style were simple and without affectation, almost purely utilitarian with their own well defined character. These were referred to as popular art. They proclaimed in their design the sentiments of the country in the era in which they were created. Born out of other ideas and needs, and using distinct materials, the result was something completely different than the architecture in Spain or in any other Spanish colony.

The most modest example was in Calle Escuela in Intramuros which reminded Perales of a town in Granada. Well painted white, it was attractive in its modesty and the simplicity of its timber without crevices. There was no preoccupation with symmetry and the hollows were purely for ventilation. The only concession to beauty was flower pots.

Another structure on the Calle de Bilbao in San Nicolas as well as another in Calle de S. Francisco in Intramuros had a series of eight arcades of semicircles repeated in the upper story, sustaining a gallery whose wooden balusters were exquisite. Despite the lamentable state of preservation, the carvings of terra cotta emitted an air of enchantment, of romanticism. Located in the plaza of the Church of San Francisco, it was not a particularly tall two-story structure. The mark over the doors and windows was somber, with the same decoration in all of them. The only décor on the white façade were three balconies with their balusters. The house was probably built in the 17th century right beside the street with only a small sidewalk separating it.

(From Hispanidad.).

Perfect illusion

YOUNG BLOOD

Cathy Buena

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

I CONFESS. I have a phobia that directly concerns homosexuals. Gay and bisexual men in particular (and those who refuse to be labeled as such but are attracted to people of the same sex). But don't get me wrong. I'm not homophobic. How can I be when a majority of my good friends are gay? And as far as I can remember, I seem to have naturally accepted homosexuality as a reality of life.

I was raised a Catholic, so my unconditional acceptance of homosexuality may seem odd. I went to an all-girls high school run by Benedictine sisters wherein teachings in Religion clearly condemned homosexual practices. And yet during my senior year, I wrote a comprehensive book review on "Ladlad: an anthology of Philippine gay writing." It was the first time I voiced out my radical position on an issue considered taboo in my immediate environment. To tell you honestly, the book review wasn't even written that well, but my strong empathy for homosexuals was apparent in that baby thesis.

Call me a fag hag if you must, but I'm not just your typical "gay-besotted female," as Neil Garcia would put it. I'm special, because more than just being a woman who's constantly around gay men, I have the ability to make them rethink their sexual orientation. I push my victims (yes, victims) into deluding themselves that a romantic involvement with me can actually be satisfying. They succumb to the misleading spell cast by constant togetherness, and begin to think they're falling in love with me. Worse, they get me into believing it's for real.

Rico. Odie. Anton. Andre. Migs. They are my unfortunate victims. They're all quite different from one other, but the pattern of my relationships with each of them is similar.

It starts from a seemingly platonic relationship characterized by the usual bonding sessions over alcohol and nicotine. He talks, I listen intently. He gripes about his sufferings, I comfort him. He curses this society which condemns his lifestyle, I empathize with him. I embrace him completely, seeing beyond his anomalous sexual orientation to the good, creative and deeply sensitive person beneath all the preconceptions that go with the label. I begin to look like the one he has always been searching for: the perfect companion, the indispensable anchor, the one who understands. I am his saving grace! And I am readily available to him practically 2 hours a day. How can I resist a lonely guy who calls hims gay? The irony just kills me.

Somewhere in the middle of genuine friendship and mutual understanding, the perfect illusion of a long-lasting and completely satisfying romantic relationship is created. He confesses his confusion and asks me if I am open to the possibility of an "US." I rid myself of all the doubts. I recklessly throw all caution to the wind and tell myself to have faith in the power of true love: that it will see beyond the corporeal being to the essence of the self. So what if he's gay? We have all the ingredients that make up a beautiful romance: respect, acceptance, genuine caring, and perhaps, even sexual attraction. I let go and take the plunge! I fall with increasing velocity, experiencing a multitude of raw emotions.

But the high is short-lived. Being unprepared, reality hits me hard, with my self-esteem as its No. 1 target. I am left cold, naked, vulnerable. With whatever's left of my dignity, I force myself to accept the painful truth that my beloved has run off with a guy he met through the Internet.

I'm not homophobic. It's not them that I'm frightened of. I fear myself, and what is bound to happen when I get too close to a gay man. Inevitably, I will be left empty-handed.

Rico. Odie. Anton. Andre. Migs. Five times in the last four years. I must be missing out on a very important lesson here, as life continuously throws the same kind of farce at me. But what is it about me? My extremely short hair or the strong masculine aura that I seem to emit (as the tarot reader said)?

Or perhaps, the world is just complicating the phenomenon of attraction. Man-made rules of discrimination could be conditioning people of various sexual orientations to limit themselves to their own kind. I find it ironic that there are some homosexuals who eventually close their minds and hearts to the possibility that they can still end up being attracted to people of the opposite sex. To do this means to close their minds and hearts to the very foundation by which their cause is built upon: free love.

Whatever the case, I still do not appreciate being the guinea pig that will eventually confirm as fact that gay men want people of the same sex. Never mind that Rico remains my best friend in this confused world. It's still not flattering to be called a cosmic mistake, a mispackaged soul. I hate it. I feel like a litmus paper. If he turns blue, he is definitely gay.

And farce is still after me. There's guy No. 6. He says he's bisexual, and he's slowly easing his way into my life.

Cathy Buena, 24, works as a corporate communications writer for an Ayala company and also does freelance writing for some government websites and for a teen magazine.

THEY SAID

Not guilty

"Despite the criticism that he is a crony of President Marcos, I don't think you can point to any shenanigan he has done."

—Sen. Edgardo Angara, explaining his support for Eduardo Cojuangco as presidential candidate

Sellout

"For the administration to enter into negotiations and an amicable settlement with Piatco (Philippine International Air Terminal Co. Inc.) after the high court has ruled these contracts to be in violation of public policy and the law is, by itself, grossly anomalous and amounts to a sellout of the government's paramount interest."

—Lawyer Perfecto Yasay, objecting to fresh negotiations on Naia Terminal 3 between the government and Piatco

Stinging defeat

"It hurts. I haven't had this feeling in a long time. But it's reality, it's life, so you have to suck it up and move on."

—Shaquille O'Neil, after his team lost in semifinals of the Western conference of the National Basketball Association

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Of empires and vassals

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

ROME started out as a small city, but today what we know of ancient history revolves around the Roman Empire. The Mongolians, who began as nomadic tribes, were able to occupy China and establish the Yuan dynasty. And Britain, with a land area smaller than that of the Philippines, carved out an empire on which the sun never set.

How were these empires built? Brute force certainly played an important role, with millions of lives lost to the onslaught of the imperial armies. Military might was important as well to intimidate the new subjects and to extract taxes and tributes to sustain the empires.

But we have to pause, too, and wonder, how the imperial powers, with relatively small home bases, could deploy so many of their soldiers and administrators to watch over such vast territories.

Actually, they didn't. The most successful empires sent only a handful of colonial administrators and troops to maintain the colonies. The key to the colonizers' success was their ability to transform the local elite into loyal intermediaries. The British were masters here, managing to control the huge Indian subcontinent through a network of vassal raj states, each nominally headed by a maharajah.

Tapping the warlords and their armies was useful to keep the natives from uniting and revolting. The effects of this divide-and-rule strategy remained long after the colonial administrators left—just look at the Philippines and the way we continue to be divided by loyalties to individual leaders than to a nation.

Mind you, it was important to give the local warlords a sense that they were in power. Historical archives are filled with accounts of the extravagant lifestyles of these local satraps, lifestyles that were sometimes even more opulent than those of their colonial masters. The historical accounts speak, too, of how these local leaders would go off to the imperial courts to pay homage to the empire, where they would be wined and dined with great fanfare.

The imperial courts knew how to play on these local hirelings' conceits, extolling their loyalty and friendship, proclaiming them as invaluable allies. Their puppets were not completely guileless either. They knew that their loyalty to powerful emperors meant that they, too, could bask in imperial glory, which in turn legitimized their own power back home. It was important for stories of the grand receptions in the imperial courts to circulate back home, to let the natives know that the local chief was backed by even more powerful lords.

Today we don't talk of empires and vassals, but future historians will find that even in the early 21st century, such relations persisted, and the Philippines provided a perfect case example. The historians will marvel at the way our President's state visit was covered in the Philippines, with front page headlines and photographs proclaiming a triumphant visit, praising GMA's loyalty to the United States and how this would usher in an era of peace and prosperity. They will read of Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. calling on the United States to broker peace in Mindanao, and the growing clamor for GMA to remain President beyond 2004 to guarantee continuing US support for the Philippines.

Local media coverage of GMA's state visit was quite different from what the US media had. In the East Coast, GMA's state visit made it to the front page only in the Washington Times, a right-wing newspaper owned by the Moonies. The New York Times featured the visit in the inside pages, the articles mentioning GMA almost incidentally, as part of Bush's war against terrorism.

Almost as if there was nothing to report on, an Associated Press dispatch on the state dinner focused on what the guests wore (GMA in a "purple dress with a lime-green sash," Laura Bush in "a shimmering golden gown"), on the food served (crabs, mango sorbet with coconut mousse), on the floral arrangements and table settings (do you really want to know?). The AP dispatch was used by both The New York Times and the Washington Post, the latter carrying the article in its Style section.

I sense there was more than a reference to height in this excerpt from the AP dispatch: "Arroyo, considerably shorter than Bush, stood on a box at his lectern in the State Dining Room to return the toast. 'We've stood side by side at every crucial point in modern history,' she said."

Another New York Times article, headlined "Bush promises more US troops to Philippines (sic) leader," gives this version of our history: "The United States won possession of the Islands in the Spanish-American War of 1898. They were later a commonwealth, and became an independent country in 1946." Yup, just as GMA has no persona apart from Bush, "the Islands" have no identity except as an object of Mother America winning us, possessing us, civilizing us, granting us independence.

The New York Times article described how "eager" GMA was "to acquire contracts for Philippine businesses in the rebuilding of Iraq" and how she wanted "to see more American investment in the Islands," the desire for trade being, of course "in the context of fighting terrorism."

The Islands again. That term, together with "Philippine Islands" and "PI," are hangovers from the colonial period. ("PI," I should remind expats and Filipino-Americans who still use the term, is also an abbreviation for an obscene expression.) But we shouldn't be surprised with such terminologies, given that we've prostrated ourselves as unquestioning Bush lackeys, offering our men to help fight imperial wars, and turning somersaults when the imperial commander in chief offers us "non-Nato ally" status and a return visit (actually, a stopover for an Apec meeting).

How was the coverage in the media of other Western countries? Kris Aquino's senatorial ambitions was given more substantive coverage.

We shouldn't expect the Americans, or the world, to respect us, to recognize we're no longer "PI" but an independent "RP," unless we learn to respect ourselves.

LETTERS
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Anti-terrorism bill fit to be junked

THIS is about the call of Sen. Vicente Sotto III and Rep. Teodoro Locsin Jr. to junk the anti-terrorism bill.

Finally, there is cause for relief. According to the report, Sotto and Locsin, in separate speeches, enumerated not just the "major defects" but also the "glaring deficiencies" in the anti-terror bills. Thus, Locsin suggested that the bill be sent to the UP Law Center for further study for 50 years to prevent widespread violation of civil, political and human rights while failing to fully combat terrorism. On the other hand, Sotto said that the bill ought to be voted down. He said that while it did not even define the crime covered it would set penalties for the offenders.

Since the start of the discussions regarding the anti-terrorism bills, Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP) has been strong in its stand against its passage. Along with other human rights organizations and other groups and individuals, TFDP believes that enacting the anti-terrorism bill into law would only open the floodgates to more violations of human rights. Moreover, since it describes criminal acts already punishable by law, having another law, which would contain the same provision, is unnecessary.

TFDP lauds Sotto and Locsin for speaking out against the passage of the bill. We are comforted that finally we have allies in Congress and that there is a recognition that the anti-terrorism bill does not provide a solution to the problem of terrorism. Instead, the pending bills are just "formulas for repression and state terror and are most likely to worsen the injustices that are at the root of the existing armed conflicts."

We strongly hope that the anti-terrorism bill will get its long-deserved end.

—AURORA A. PARONG, MD, executive director, Task Force Detainees of the Philippines, 45 St. Mary St., Cubao, Quezon City

Only Congress can decide on vehicle excise bill

I REFER to the article last April 24, entitled "Gov't threatens to withdraw bill on vehicle excise tax," by Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

I would like to clarify that it is only Congress which can determine the fate of the bill. We can only go as far as officially presenting our positions during the committee hearings called by Congress.

I mentioned during the interview with Cabacungan and a few other press people that things have progressed quite well as regards to the vehicle excise tax bill but interpellation were currently being made in the Senate. In response to a question from one of the reporters, I stated that DTI/BOI might have to introduce amendments to the bill to address the remaining concerns of our legislators in case the bill is not approved by May 19, the supposed date of effectivity of Revenue Regulation 4-2003.

—GREGORY L. DOMINGO,
DTI Undersecretary
and BOI vice chair
and managing head

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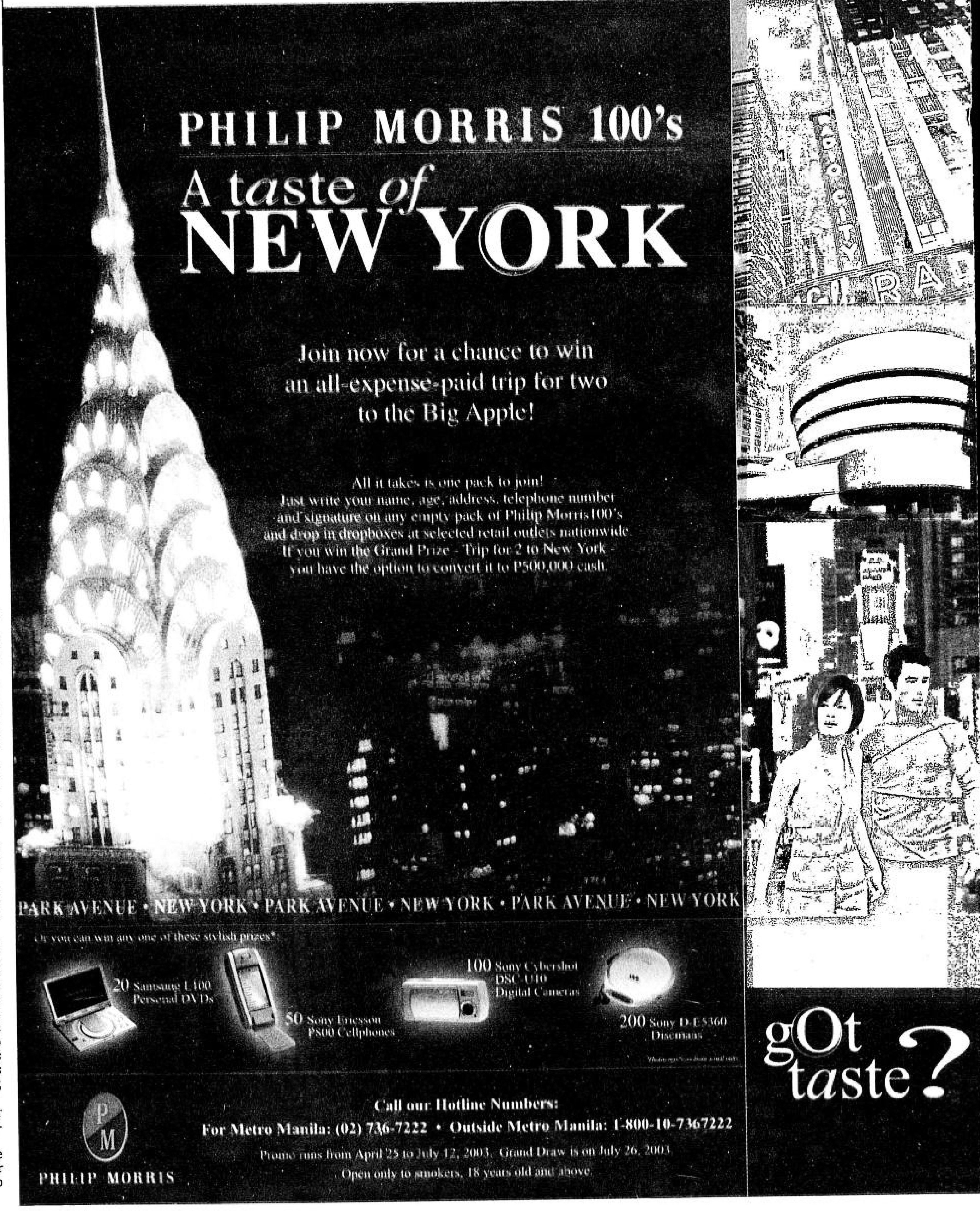

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

A CHINESE worker, wearing a mask to ward off the SARS virus, prepares traditional buns at an eatery in Shanghai on May 26. Authorities in China's capital have cautioned residents not to relax vigilance against SARS despite the fact that the number of new cases has fallen fast. REUTERS

Toronto back in SARS map

China reports lowest increase; Taiwan health chief quits

TAIPEI, Taiwan—China reported its lowest increase in new Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) cases in months on Monday but the Canadian city of Toronto was back on the map of the disease's trouble spots and the health chief in Taiwan's capital quit over a major outbreak in a hospital.

Thailand warned that its top resort island of Phuket faces financial ruin because of the SARS scare.

The United States issued a new travel alert for Toronto, which had thought it had shaken SARS and had launched a campaign to lure American tourists back to Canada's largest city.

Toronto officials also announced three SARS deaths, bringing the world's toll Monday to at least 724.

More than 8,100 people have been infected worldwide since the disease emerged in November in China's southern Guangdong province. China's mainland and its territory Hong Kong account for the vast majority of cases and deaths.

Health officials in China on Monday announced eight new SARS cases and two fatalities on its mainland—the lowest reported daily increase since it began reporting deaths and infections in April. The numbers have been steadily falling from highs of more than 150 cases a day at the beginning of May.

Taipei's health chief, Chiu Shu-ti, resigned late Sunday night, taking the blame for last month's SARS outbreak at the capital's Hoping Hospital. The facility was the source for most of the island's SARS infections.

Taiwan reported 15 new cases Monday, bringing its total infections to 585. *AP*

Chinese scientists meet online to fight SARS

BEIJING—Chinese scientists across the world have taken a united front to find an effective way of containing SARS epidemic.

A total of 86 overseas Chinese experts in 14 countries participated in an online meeting Sunday, exchanging ideas about how to treat SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome).

The Internet meeting lasted a whole day and at least 170 suggestions on three topics were gathered—SARS diagnosis in the initial period, vaccines and anti-SARS drugs.

Li Xueyong, vice minister of science and technology, expressed gratitude to all the participants.

A cross-Straits symposium in the form of a videoconference was also held Sunday on how to prevent and treat SARS with traditional Chinese medicine (TCM).

Scores of TCM experts from the mainland and Taiwan attended the three-party event organized by the China Association of Chinese Medicine, with separate meeting rooms in Beijing, Guangzhou and Taipei.

The move followed a similar symposium between Western medicine experts from the three cities and aimed to push ahead with joint efforts by both sides of the Taiwan Straits to fight the SARS outbreak.

Li Junde, secretary general of the association, said mainland people, especially medical workers, are deeply concerned with the worsening SARS situation on the island.

"We hope TCM experts from across the Straits can share their experience in applying TCM treatment to combat SARS to bring this epidemic under control at an early date," he told the two-hour meeting.

Li said mainland health care workers have achieved initial success in treating SARS through TCM treatment, which may help their Taiwan counterparts make better use of such therapy.

Taiwan Sunday reported 22 new SARS cases, 12 deaths and 20 suspected SARS cases. The number of SARS cases in Taiwan has grown to 570, with 72 deaths, and is expected to rise further *China News Daily/Asia News Network*

Koizumi, Bush warn N. Korea

TOKYO—Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and US President George W. Bush agreed Friday that the two nations would take tough measures against North Korea, including economic sanctions, if it escalates its nuclear activities, although they would basically pursue a peaceful solution.

At the summit held at Bush's ranch in Crawford, Koizumi said he would consider dispatching the Self-Defense Forces to participate in the reconstruction of Iraq on condition that the Iraq reconstruction and stabilization bill was submitted to and passed through the current Diet session.

Regarding the abduction of Japanese by North Korean agents, Bush said the United States would continue cooperating with Japan until the whereabouts of all the abducted Japanese were clarified.

They agreed they would not tolerate North Korea possessing, developing or transferring nuclear arms and would demand that the communist country abandon its nuclear weapons development program immediately and completely in a verifiable manner.

They confirmed that Japan and the United States would take "tougher measures" against North Korea if it escalated its nuclear activities.

Such "tougher measures" include the imposition of economic sanctions, such as halting cash remittances to North Korea, if Pyongyang moves to resume reprocessing spent nuclear fuel or to fire a ballistic missile.

Bush said: "I believe we can solve this peacefully. I believe that diplomacy can work. And as importantly, Japan and the United States will not be blackmailed by North Korean threats, and that's important for the North Korean leadership to know."

Koizumi said, "The US position, I understand, is that all options will remain available."
Yomiuri Shimbun/ANN

ing is dangerous to health

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2. Only smokers, 18 years old and above (as of April 25, 2003), who are Philippine residents, can join Philip Morris 100's "A Taste of New York" Raffle promotion.
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4 - Trip for 2 to New York, USA
20 - Samsung Personal DVD L100
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9. The names of the winners will be published in one of the leading national newspapers on August 10, 2003. Winners will be notified via telegram as to when and where they can claim their prize.
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11. In claiming a prize, the winner must present the notification telegram and two (2) original and valid identification documents [driver's license, passport, NBI clearance, birth certificate].
12. In case the winner fails to present original and valid identification documents, the winner should present the following:
    - 12.1. A sworn affidavit executed by at least two (2) disinterested persons attesting to his/her identity; and
    - 12.2. Certification from the responsible Municipality/City official verifying that he/she is a resident of the said Municipality/City.
13. In cases where the winner, for justifiable reasons, cannot personally claim his/her prize, he/she can send a proxy on his/her behalf. The proxy should present a letter of authorization duly signed for by the winner. This should be submitted with the notification telegram sent by Philip Morris Philippines Manufacturing Inc. and two (2) original and valid IDs of the winner. The proxy should also bring two (2) original and valid documents to prove his/her identity.
14. An entrant can only win once. If a name is drawn more than once, the winner will receive the prize of a higher value and a winner for the other prize will be re-drawn.
15. Winners authorize Philip Morris Philippines Manufacturing Inc. to disclose and publish their names and other particulars as determined by Philip Morris Philippines Manufacturing Inc., and in any mode or manner as Philip Morris Philippines Manufacturing Inc. deems appropriate, without need of any further permission from, or notice to, the winners.
16. The major prize (Trip for 2 to New York) is non-transferable, but is convertible to cash in the event the winner does not want to take the trip and/or fails to secure/complete the necessary documents for the trip, such as the passport and US visa. The cash equivalent of Php 500,000.00 shall be awarded. The 4 other minor prizes are non-transferable and non-convertible to cash.
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74 killed in Turkey plane crash

RESCUERS and soldiers work May 26 amid the debris of an Ukrainian plane carrying 62 Spanish troops returning from peacekeeping duty in Afghanistan after it crashed outside Trabzon, near the Black Sea in northeast Turkey. The plane crashed after two aborted attempts to land in thick fog and rain. There were no survivors out of the 74 people aboard, according to the reports. Inset is an undated file photo of a Yak-42 plane, similar to the Ukrainian Yak-42 plane that crashed. AFP, AP

Passengers mostly Spanish peacekeeping forces returning from duty in Afghanistan

ANKARA, Turkey—Seventy-four people, mostly Spanish peacekeeping forces serving in Afghanistan, were killed when a Ukrainian plane crashed early Monday while trying to refuel in northwest Turkey, Turkish media reported.

The plane was flying from Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, to Zaragoza, Spain, with a refueling stop in the Black Sea port of Trabzon, private NTV television reported, quoting unnamed Turkish aviation officials.

Russian-made plane

The Russian made YAK-42 hit a mountain slope near the town of Macka, 50 km south of the Black Sea port of Trabzon, NTV said. It carried 62 passengers—all Spanish peacekeeping forces—and 12 crew members, the television station said, quoting Turkish officials.

In Madrid, the Spanish Defense Ministry confirmed that there were 41 Army soldiers and 21 air force personnel aboard the plane.

The newspaper El Mundo reported on its website that the Army troops were from an engineers regiment and had just finished a four-month tour. The newspaper added that until now there had been no deaths among the Spanish troops participating in the Afghan peacekeeping mission.

Turkish military officials at the scene said there were no survivors, private CNN-Turk television reported. The soldiers found the plane's black box which could indicate whether there were any failures in the aircraft's operations or its systems.

Turkish soldiers retrieved more than 25 charred bodies from the wreckage, Gov. Aslan Yildirim of Trabzon told CNN-Turk.

"Most bodies are in pieces or dismembered," Yildirim said. "It will be very difficult to identify them."

The plane, which apparently carried some ammunition belonging to the Spanish soldiers, burst into flames and exploded into pieces upon impact. Turkish soldiers said there were still unexploded hand grenades among the wreckage and evacuated the site fearing possible explosions, CNN-Turk reported.

Twisted and burned metal

Television footage showed a huge pile of twisted and burned metal covering a wide area. One witness, Sait Topcu, told CNN-Turk that the plane was exploding in flames when he reached the site.

"I had to wait 15-20 minutes for the explosions to end before I could get near to it," Topcu said. "I saw two charred bodies and called the paramilitary police." *AP*

Argentina's 6th president in 18 months sworn in

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina—Nestor Kirchner was sworn in as Argentina's sixth president in 18 months on Sunday aspiring to be the leader who closes the chapter on an economic collapse that plunged millions into poverty.

To a packed Congress and a dozen Latin American leaders, the Peronist governor from Patagonia said he would restore faith in the government after the mismanagement, cronyism and corruption of the last decade.

"We know where we are going and where we don't want to return," Kirchner said in his inaugural speech after caretaker President Eduardo Duhalde handed him the presidential sash and baton.

A year and a half after Argentines took to the streets banging pots and pans to protest against politicians, polls show a majority is optimistic about the little-known Kirchner.

In the central Plaza de Mayo square, Kirchner broke away from security to hug followers, cutting his forehead in the fray. A crowd of 15,000 hailed him and his senator wife, Cristina, as they stood on the balcony where Juan and Eva Peron gave speeches almost 60 years ago.

The center-leftist takes office with just 22 percent of the vote from a first-round election after ex-President Carlos Menem dropped out of the runoff to avoid a humiliating defeat.

"I have confidence in Kirchner's honesty and strength, but I'm afraid because evil is always stronger," said Robel Colamarino, 75, worried that opponents will bring him down.

Two of the last three elected presidents in Argentina resigned, including Fernando de la Rua, who quit after dozens were killed in food riots and protests in December 2001.

Four more men held the presidency in two weeks while Argentina declared a debt default and devalued its currency.

Duhalde, against odds, achieved some stability in the last 17 months, but leaves much of the crisis cleanup to Kirchner.

Latin leaders like Brazil's Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and Cuba's Fidel Castro came to Buenos Aires to lend support to a nation that was one of the world's wealthiest 80 years ago and a middle class model. *Reuters*

INTENSE US PRESSURE

Israel accepts creation of Palestinian state

JERUSALEM—In a historic vote cast under intense US pressure, Israel's hardline government on Sunday reluctantly approved a Mideast peace plan that formally recognizes the Palestinians' right to a state, but left itself an escape hatch from unwelcome provisions.

"The decision . . . was as difficult as crossing the Red Sea," Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom said of the 12-7 Cabinet vote, with four abstentions. Those opposed, including ministers from Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's own Likud party, said they feared the plan endangered Israel's existence.

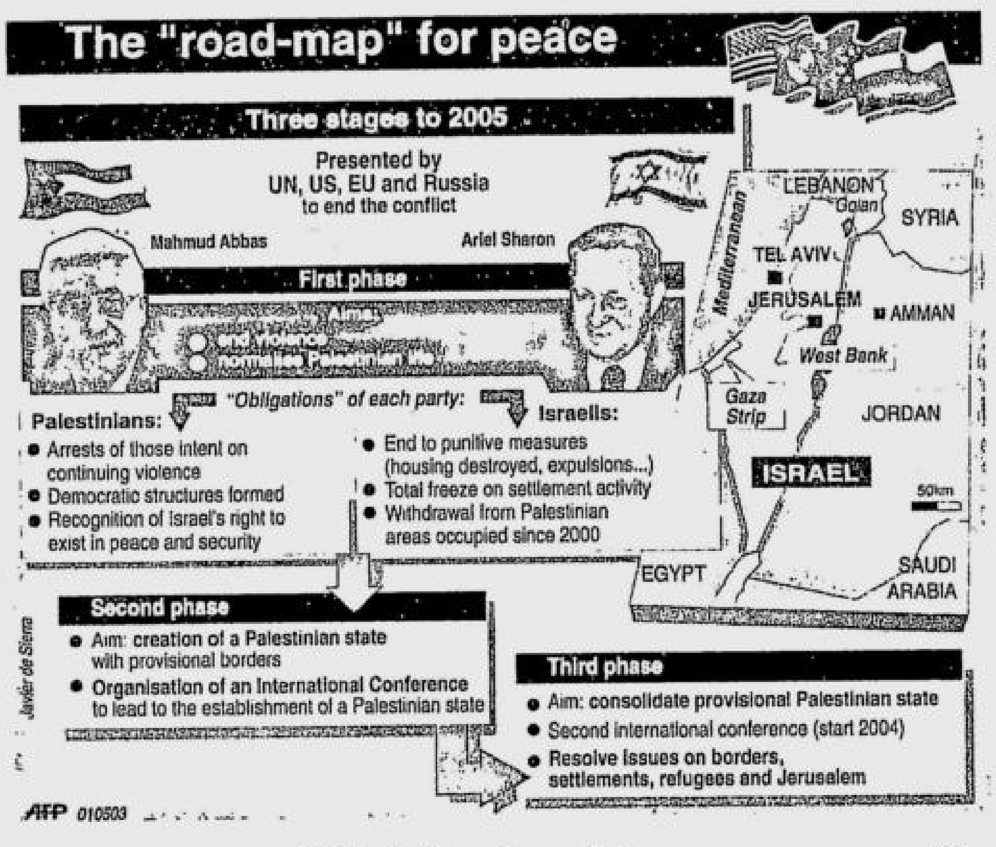
The vote came after six hours of passionate debate and injected new momentum into the often-delayed "road map" to Mideast peace, a three-stage plan that envisions a full Palestinian state by 2005.

It was seen as a US achievement, after weeks of cajoling Israel to sign on to the plan, and was expected to help counter the US image in the Arab world as being one-sided in the conflict.

However, Israel's acceptance was diluted by qualifiers; the vote was held on "steps defined by the road map," and not the entire document.

And many disagreements remain, including over who should make the first move, because of the deep distrust created by 32 months of fighting that have claimed more than 3,000 lives, two-thirds on the Palestinian side.

The Palestinians, who accepted the plan a month ago, were disappointed by what they said was Israel's muddled response, but indicated they were ready to move ahead. *AP*


The "road-map" for peace
Three stages to 2005
Presented by
UN, US, EU and Russia
to end the conflict
Mahmud Abbas
Ariel Sharon
First phase
Aim:
"Obligations" of each party:
Palestinians:
Arrests of those intent on continuing violence
Democratic structures formed
Recognition of Israel's right to exist in peace and security
Israelis:
End to punitive measures (housing destroyed, expulsions...)
Total freeze on settlement activity
Withdrawal from Palestinian areas occupied since 2000
Second phase
Aim: creation of a Palestinian state with provisional borders
Organisation of an International Conference to lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state
Third phase
Aim: consolidate provisional Palestinian state
Second international conference (start 2004)
Resolve issues on borders, settlements, refugees and Jerusalem
LEBANON
Golan
SYRIA
Mediterranean
TEL AVIV
JERUSALEM
AMMAN
West Bank
Gaza Strip
JORDAN
ISRAEL
50km
EGYPT
SAUDI ARABIA
Javier de Sierra
AFP 010503

Next step: Middle East peace summit

CRAWFORD, Texas—Israel's qualified acceptance of a US inspired "road map" for peace with the Palestinians has boosted the chances of President George W. Bush holding a peace summit in the region.

The White House hailed Israel's qualified acceptance of the blueprint on Sunday as "an important step forward" and reports said a White House advance party had gone to Egypt and Jordan to prepare a possible summit.

"We look forward to working with all parties in the region to realize the vision of peace which the president laid out," White House spokesperson Adam Levine said. *AFP*

Indonesia asks Thailand to arrest Free Aceh leader

BANDUNG—Indonesian Police have requested the Thai government arrest Free Aceh Movement (GAM) leader Zakirah Zaman, who has allegedly been hiding in Thailand for some time.

National Police chief Gen. Da'i Bachtiar said here on Saturday that Zakirah was known to be one of GAM's main leaders.

"We have informed the Thai government about the presence of the man, but so far it has not yet located him," Da'i said during his visit to the West Java capital.

He said the police had mentioned the escape of the rebel chief to Thailand to visiting Thai Foreign Minister Surakiart Sathirathai on Friday.

"He (Zakirah) has been living in Thailand for quite a while and, according to information, was one of GAM's top leaders," Da'i said.

Earlier, Jakarta asked Bangkok to help prevent the smuggling of arms from Thailand to GAM guerrilla fighters, following reports on the movement of arms from southern Thailand to Aceh.

Thailand and Indonesia have signed an extradition treaty. *Jakarta Post/ ANN*

AN ACEHNESE elementary school student rides past by as Indonesian security forces conduct a patrol in Sibreh sub-district, Aceh province May 26. The major offensive against the Acehnese separatist rebels in the oil-and-gas rich province entered its second week. AP

Saddam's son had wanted to surrender —Time mag

WASHINGTON—One of the sons of deposed Iraqi President Saddam Hussein tried to contact US occupation officials in Baghdad through an intermediary to negotiate a safe surrender, Time magazine reported.

The report, in the Monday issue, said a Hussein relative had approached an intermediary asking the United States if Saddam's son Uday can "work out something" or "get some kind of immunity."

The magazine cites a family servant and another source familiar with the communications as saying that Saddam Hussein and both his sons, Uday and Qusay, had survived the two US attempts on Saddam's life.

Time also said that one reason the front lines against Baghdad fell so easily was because Qusay kept impulsively moving Republican Guard units from one place to another, right up to the last minute.

As a result, many were simply out of position when the US troops arrived, the report said. *AFP*

Iran arrests members of al-Qaida network

WASHINGTON—With Washington turning up the heat on Iran for alleged al-Qaida operations in the Islamic republic, leading US lawmakers predicted on Sunday a positive development soon in the war there on terrorism.

Iran's ambassador to the United Nations told ABC's "This Week" his country had arrested several members of the al-Qaida network of Osama bin Laden, but had not yet identified them.

He also said his country would be willing to turn them over to "friendly governments," such as Saudi Arabia.

Sen. Pat Roberts, the Republican chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee, and other lawmakers said some positive development related to Iran was expected soon.

"There may be some good news around the corner, and that's about all I'll say about that," Roberts said.

West Virginia Democrat Jay Rockefeller, another member of the panel, said, "There could be some better news on Iran that will be coming out."

None would detail what was expected, but Roberts indicated it was related to US charges that al-Qaida leaders were operating out of Iran and possibly linked to the recent suicide bombings in Saudi Arabia.

"There are efforts being made that would be very productive in regard to Iran and ourselves, with the understanding of the al-Qaida cell that allegedly came from Iran and had something to do with the Saudi Arabia attacks. I think we're going to make some progress on that," Roberts told NBC's "Meet the Press."

The Washington Post reported, meanwhile, that the White House was set to consider on Tuesday an effort to destabilize the Iranian government through a popular uprising.

White House spokesperson Scott McClellan would not confirm or deny that meeting, but told reporters US policy toward Tehran "remains the same."

"The unelected few in Iran need to heed the wishes of the Iranian people," he added, referring to the religious clerics who run the country.

Intelligence reports said al-Qaida operatives in Iran played a role in the suicide bombings in Saudi Arabia in which 34 people, including eight Americans, died.

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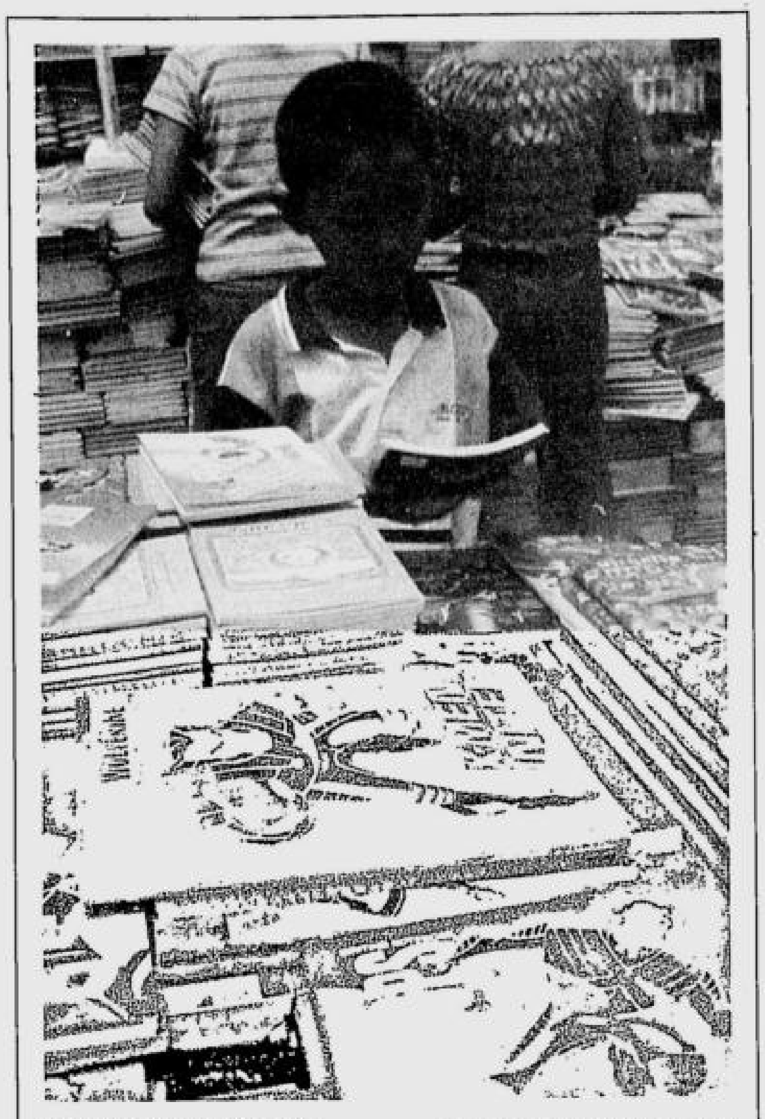


SO MANY CHOICES BING GONZALES/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU
This boy takes his pick of a notebook as he prepares for the school opening that comes in two weeks' time.

Comelec orders recount of mayoral votes in Ecija

CABANATUAN CITY—The Commission on Elections has ordered the immediate recount of votes cast in the 2001 mayoral elections in San Isidro, Nueva Ecija, "to determine the genuine will of the electorate in that town."

The Comelec also ordered the creation of a new board of election inspectors for all the town's precincts and a new municipal board of canvassers.

The order, which was given to the provincial Comelec office here, also directs the immediate proclamation of the winner.

The board of canvassers proclaimed Sonia Lorenzo as the duly elected mayor of San Isidro. But the votes for one of her three opponents, former Mayor Nestor Magno, who appeared to be her closest rival, was not canvassed after the Comelec disqualified Magno.

The disqualification order came when the votes were being counted.

In the disqualification case, Lorenzo's camp claimed that Magno was convicted of four counts of direct bribery by the Sandiganbayan.

The complaint also said Magno had not completed the five-year probation at the time of the filing of his certificate of candidacy.

The Sandiganbayan, in its decision on June 25, 1998, found Magno guilty of asking financial favors from jueteng operators. Magno applied for probation and was discharged on May 5, 1998.

Magno appealed the decision before the Supreme Court.

In a recent decision, the high tribunal declared that Magno had "no more disqualification" when he ran for the elective post in 2001.

The High Court cited a provision of the Local Government Code, which provided for only two years of disqualification for the case on appeal. It added that the Omnibus Election Code must yield to the particular provision of the Local Government Code.

The Court, however, denied Magno's petition to declare him the winner in the 2001 elections.

Magno filed a protest before the Comelec, which issued on May 13 an *en banc* resolution ordering a recount.

Magno's camp claimed that the unofficial tally of votes from all precincts of San Isidro showed that he won over Lorenzo "by a big margin."

In Bulacan, the Comelec lifted its *status quo* order on the mayoral row in San Ildefonso town and ordered that a pending court case on the conflict should proceed.

In decision signed by Comelec Commissioner Ralph Lantion issued on May 20, the Comelec's second division lifted the temporary restraining order (TRO) granted on the assumption of Mayor Edgardo Galvez's court-proclaimed rival.

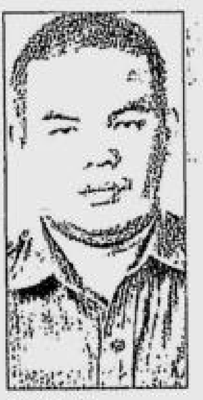
The Comelec also ordered Judge Wilfredo Nieves of the Malolos City regional trial court to proceed with hearing the case filed at his sala.

Former San Ildefonso Vice Mayor Romeo Venturina filed an election protest against Galvez after he lost in the mayoral race in 2001, citing poll irregularities.

Venturina won the protest but failed to assume the mayoral post after Galvez secured a TRO.

Galvez sought to annul Nieves' order declaring Venturina as the duly elected mayor of San Ildefonso, citing the judge's abuse of discretion. *Anselmo Roque and Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Countdown for Justice



WAPILE

IT IS exactly 379 days today since Pagadian journalist Edgar Damalerio was slain in cold blood. The principal suspect, police officer Guillermo Wapile, remains at large after escaping while in the custody of the police.

Monsanto assists farmers who failed in hybrid rice

CABATUAN, Isabela—At least 116 farmers in Isabela, who suffered production losses due to their failed harvest of the Magilas 500 hybrid rice seeds in the past months, were given assistance last week by seed supplier Monsanto-Philippines.

The assistance came in the form of farm and chemical inputs, said Danilo Tumamao, Isabela provincial agriculture officer.

"No cash compensation was given to the farmers and they did not replace the hybrid rice seeds. This is purely an in-kind assistance," he said.

Farmers who suffered major losses received P18,000-worth of assistance while those who reported less damage received P2,000-worth.

The affected farmers reported losses between 20 and 90 percent of their actual yields due to the unproductive hybrid rice seeds. The hybrid seeds were supposed to increase yield from 15 to 40 percent.

Tumamao said farmers who have insured their ricefields have applied for compensation at the Philippine Crop Insurance Corp.

President Macapagal-Arroyo launched the hybrid rice seeds program last year to create more jobs, ensure food security and reduce poverty in the provinces.

Emmanuel Borlongan, Monsanto-Philippines public and government affairs lead director, said they extended the assistance to help farmers re-start production.

Borlongan said Monsanto did not compensate the farmers because the failed production was traced to the climate that affected the hybrid rice seeds from December last year until February this year.

Borlongan said Monsanto formed a fact-finding task force, composed of seed research experts and marketing personnel, in early March to look into reports of crop failure in Isabela and Nueva Vizcaya.

According to the firm's findings, the cause of the failed "seed setting" was the changing temperatures in the affected areas.

Borlongan said temperature variations have greatly affected the seeds' pollination process.

"Tropical environments, such as the Philippines, experience a temperature range of 22-33 degrees Celsius, where 27-32 degrees Celsius is ideal for good rice setting. The past few months manifested a low 16-18 degrees Celsius in Northern Luzon, which affected pollen development and fertilization to take place and, thereby, affected the grain development . . . and resulted in poor seed set," Borlongan said, quoting the firm's investigation reports. *Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Suspects in P6-M Palawan sea robbery nabbed

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—Palawan police arrested four suspects in the killing of a Taiwanese businessman and his three Filipino companions after a bloody sea robbery off the coast of Taytay, Palawan last week.

Senior Supt. Emilio Garaez, Palawan police chief, identified those arrested as Elmer Bona, brothers Noel and Eddie Bona and Dennis Alcovidas, and the murder victims as Taiwanese Tang Huan I, Ricardo Bona, Arvie Arcebuche and Rodel Orubia.

Garaez said they found the bodies of the victims floating at sea near a local beach resort, except Orubia's.

He said residents reported an abandoned speedboat on the shore of Sitio Mitakul, Barangay Limanangkung in Taytay. The boat was heavily tainted with blood, prompting the police to suspect that something had happened to whoever was on board.

On Wednesday afternoon, police said residents near the shore noticed an abandoned speedboat.

They immediately called the police after finding out that the boat had bloodstains.

Taytay police alerted the provincial police in Puerto Princesa City.

Police investigators who came to the scene identified the vessel as belonging to Tang.

Further investigation revealed that the victims had just come from a trading deal. The police also found out that P6 million in cash was missing.

Police then rounded up employees of the Taiwanese, who ran a small company engaged in marine and tropical fish business in the barangay, to ask questions about the incident.

Garaez said Elmer Bona seemed nervous when police came to him. During the interrogation, Bona owned up the killing and pointed to his companions.

Elmer told police that he knew his boss would be coming from a business deal from a nearby town.

Aboard a pump boat, they waited for the speedboat and pretended that their boat was having some problems.

After the victims obliged to help, Elmer said his three companions boarded the speedboat and instantly opened fire at the victims. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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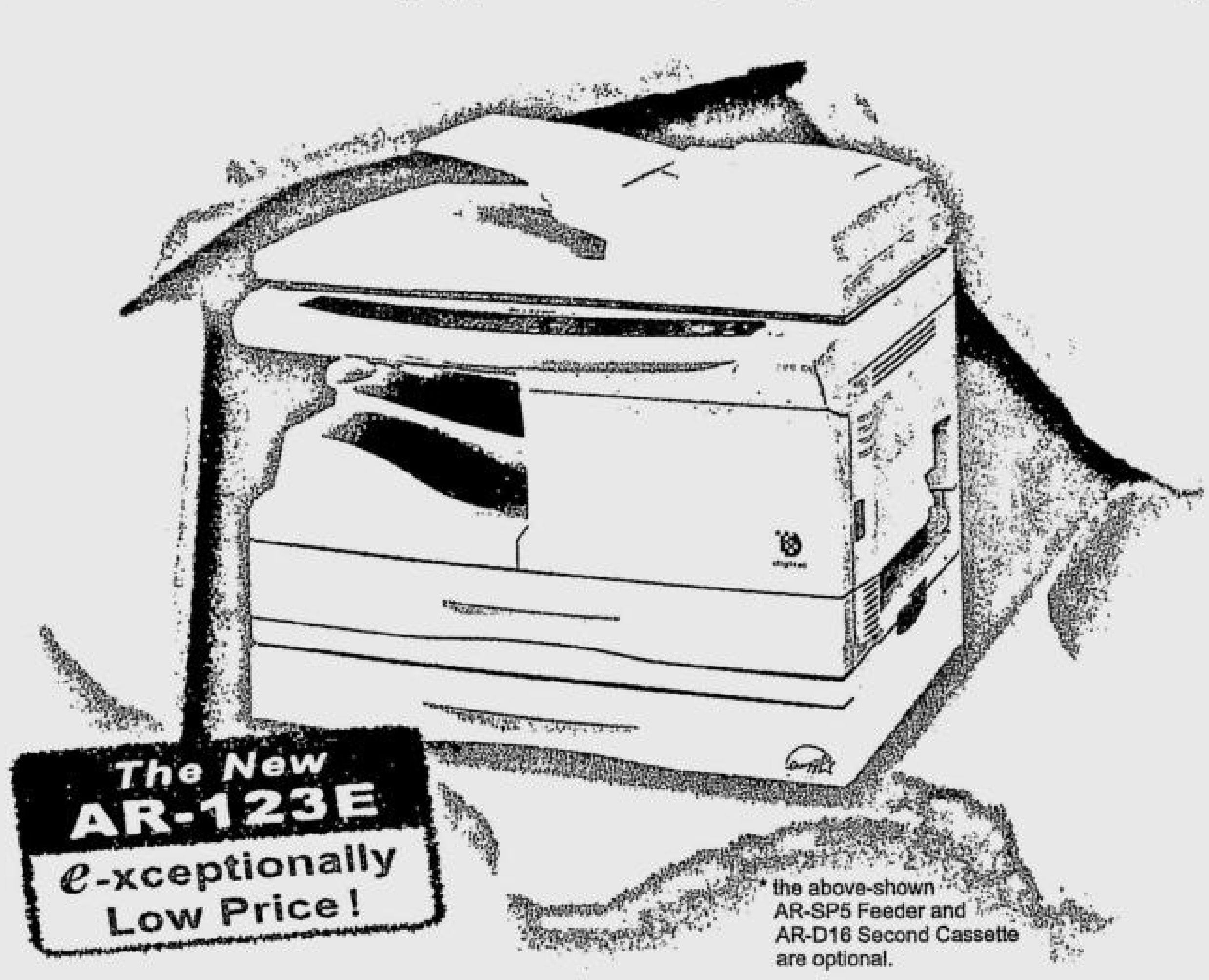

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Radioman's slay suspects had murder cases—cops

OPPD DETAINEE
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DELFIN MALLARI JR./PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

THE TWO suspects in the murder of Lucena commentator Polly Pobeda, Eulogio "Eloy" Patulay (right) and his brother Eric, were presented to the media last Friday.

LUCENA CITY—The Quezon police chief has revealed that the two arrested suspects on the murder of dwTI commentator Apolinario "Polly" Pobeda, were also involved in several murder cases in the past.

Senior Supt. Ricardo Padilla, Quezon police chief, said several court records in San Pablo City in Laguna and Sariaya and Guinyangan towns in Quezon, show that Eulogio "Eloy" Patulay and his brother Eric, had also faced trials on a string of murder cases.

But he said the court had acquitted the two. A brother of the suspects has also been detained in Laguna for a similar murder charge, Padilla said.

Padilla is a member of Task Force Polly (TFP) that is investigating the murder of Pobeda.

When asked about some items allegedly confiscated from the suspects, which could link them to some local officials, Padilla dismissed the information as "untrue and pure wild speculations."

A highly reliable source told the INQUIRER that an insider who has "explosive information" surrounding the arrest of the suspects, is willing to come out in the open and reveal all in due time.

Eric denied having shot Pobeda but admitted to serving as security for Councilor Romano Talaga, one of the sons of Lucena City Mayor Ramon Talaga Jr. since April 15.

The TFP requested City Prosecutor Thelma Bustonera if they could detain the suspects at the police regional office in Canlubang, Laguna, as they expressed fear that the suspects might escape if they are confined at Camp Nakar.

But the chief prosecutor rejected the motion claiming that Camp Nakar where the Quezon police headquarter is located, is more than secured.

The case was assigned to Fiscal Joselito Tamaray.

Mayor Talaga welcomed the development but questioned the credibility of the lone eyewitness, Demetrio Salcedo.

"Why can't the TFP also look for the other eyewitnesses such as the Air Force official and the other one who has gone into hiding when the media trooped to his house near the site of the crime?"

He insisted that the suspects were not their men but just ordinary campaign workers who voluntarily offered their services. "They are not our bodyguards. That angle is only upon the machination of the political opposition."

"But first and foremost, the investigating team should first establish that the arrested suspects were really the triggermen," he stressed. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Evacuees to get seized Thai rice

By Allan Macatuno
PDI Central-Luzon Desk

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—At least 8,800 sacks of rice imported from Thailand seized by Customs officials here will be donated to the Department of Social Welfare and Development for distribution to war-torn communities in Mindanao, Bureau of Customs officials here said.

BOC personnel last week seized the rice shipment, worth about P10 million, due to lack of importation permit from the National Food Authority.

The shipment's consignees were the Export Supply Center Inc. based in Antipolo City and Goldpatch Link Intl., a brokerage firm based here.

Invalid

Reports said the firms failed to secure the NFA permit and only paid customs taxes and duties with the additional 30-percent penalty.

Andres Salvacion, newly installed Subic customs collector, invalidated the tax and penalty payments and ordered the seizure of the imported rice.

Salvacion said the payment of penalties, a process believed abused by unscrupulous importers for technical smuggling, is being used by violators to avoid seizure of taxable imported products and possible charges for violation of the tariff and customs code.

"If these illegally imported rice shipments reach the local market, it can create great losses to the local rice industry and adversely affect the income of rice farmers and farm owners," he said.

ROUNDUP

No more recall

ANGELES CITY—Seven city councilors who were subjects of a recall eight months ago announced on Tuesday that the move to oust them had "become moot and academic" and thus "over." In a joint statement, Councilors Alex Cauguiran, Irineo Alvaro, Lito Ganzon, Louie Reyes, Alex Indiongco, Ares Yabut and Agapito del Rosario said Mayor Carmelo Lazatin and his political allies had "run out of time in trying to substantiate their charges of loss of confidence." The councilors said the Local Government Code of 1991 banned the holding of a recall election one year before a scheduled regular local election. The next regular, local election is on May 10, 2004.

Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Truck hits girl, dies

BAGUIO CITY—A 12-year-old girl was killed on Wednesday when a dump truck hit her in Barangay San Carlos Heights here. But police are still trying to explain the accident, after noting that the truck's rear tire had crushed Marian May Hangdaan. But the police's initial examination of the tire suggested that Hangdaan's body was dragged up a steep road in San Carlos Heights.

Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Robbers nabbed

CAMP GEN. ALEJO SANTOS, Bulacan—Four robbery suspects operating in Bulacan were arrested by policemen during a series of operations last week. Arrested were Randy Madrigal, 25, said to be the leader of the Enduro Gang; and Edwin Niepes, 21, Richard Gloreno, 22, and Romel Salvador, 18, said to be members of the Royla robbery and car theft gang. Police said Madrigal and his group were behind two robbery incidents in Norzagaray and Sta. Maria towns this month. The three other suspects were arrested after they robbed a tricycle driver in Barangay Guyong in Sta. Maria town.

Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Nabbed for estafa

MALOLOS CITY—Police here arrested a woman who was wanted for large-scale jewelry fraud victimizing mostly Metro Manila residents. Lourdes Santiago, 54, a native of Gapan, Nueva Ecija, had just attended a court hearing here last Monday when police pounced on her. Rex Sacar Dimakuta, secretary general of the Greenhills Traders Association, and his wife Myrna, said they were also victimized by Santiago. The couple, who is engaged in jewelry trading, lost almost P5 million. Lizette Dionisio, a jewelry trader from Barangay Calvario in Meycauayan, filed estafa charges against Santiago after the latter failed to pay her almost P4 million worth of jewelry. Police said Santiago is also facing estafa charges in various courts in Olongapo City, Cavite, Quezon City, Nueva Vizcaya, Cabanatuan City, Angeles City, Pampanga and Pasig City.

Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Aid to poor kids

OAS, Albay—Some 800 poor children here will no longer worry much in the school opening next month as the Sleeping Children Around the World (Scaw) Foundation, a Canadian group, has provided them with school supplies and clothes. The Scaw that started their mission on May 7 and ended on May 22, has been helping the poor in the Philippines since 1983. Dr. Juan Torres, mission facilitator, said only one child aged 6 to 12 per family could receive the package that contains a shirt, shorts and school supplies costing P1,000. Irene Harrison, a Canadian facilitator of Scaw, said each Canadian donor gives $30.

Michael Jaucian, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

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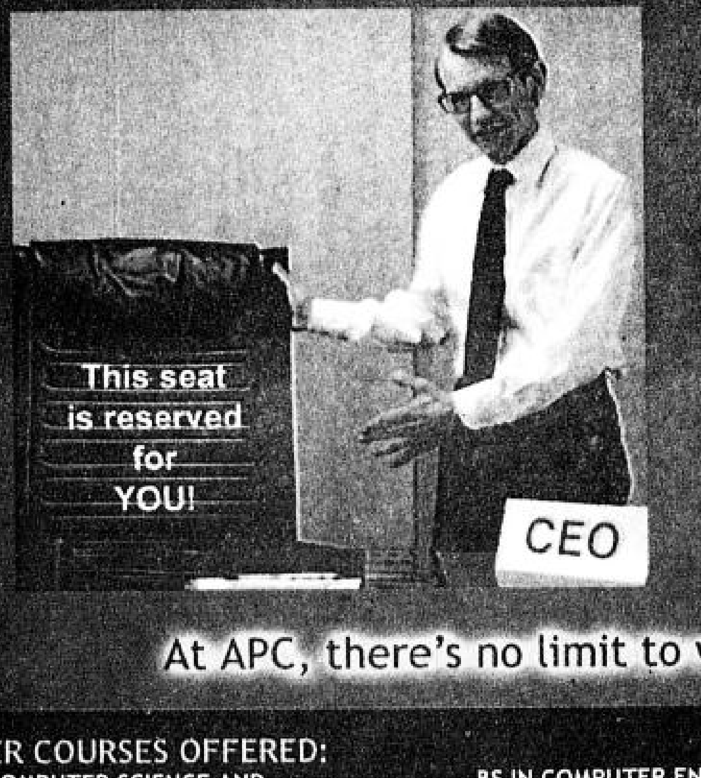
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'Another black eye in maritime safety'

From page A1

The San Nicolas and Super Ferry 12 were equipped with radio and radar. The much bigger Super Ferry 12 even had a GPS (global positioning system) but it still collided with the wooden-hulled San Nicolas, apparently due to miscommunication.

Vice Adm. Reuben Lista said the accident could have been avoided as the boats had communications equipment and were in the open sea.

Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes, concurrent head of the civil defense office, suggested that officers on both vessels had maneuvered to avoid a head-on collision amid a tropical storm.

"The maneuver was not executed perfectly," he said on television citing preliminary testimony from the San Nicolas captain who survived.

"They should have been forewarned earlier about the coming of each other. I understand too that visibility was quite impaired," Reyes said.

No response

The chief mate of the San Nicolas said the Super Ferry 12 did not respond to repeated calls over VHF radio, causing him to change direction twice, first to the right, then to the left.

But by then it was already too late, he said.

Under the International Rules and Regulation for Preventing Collision at Sea, or what is known as the "rules of the road," a silent response means "go ahead."

"Pagkatapos noon, bumulaga na lang ang Super Ferry sa harap namin (After that, the Super Ferry suddenly appeared in front of us)," Ernesto Pampola, 52, chief mate of the San Nicolas, told the INQUIRER.

The statement, among others, is contained in the official marine protest that the San Nicolas management filed with the Philippine Coast Guard yesterday afternoon. The marine protest is the official account of a ship on any accident, however minor.

Pampola's version of events confirms to some degree other accounts of what happened, particularly the now widely held belief that the San Nicolas miscalculated and hit the left rear portion of Super Ferry 12.

Radar screen

"It was zero visibility," Pampola recounted. "I could see an object on the radar screen, but I could not see the body.

"I radioed: 'Meeting vessel. Let's go port to port (meaning veer to the left). There was no response. I then changed my mind and went starboard to starboard instead," he said.

But a survivor, Cherry Bacarak, told the INQUIRER that she could see vessels miles away. *"Maalon pero kita namin malayo pa iyong Super Ferry. Sumigaw kami, 'Mababangga tayo'* (The sea was choppy but we could see the Super Ferry. We shouted, 'We will be hit')," Bacarak said.

She said her daughter Manilyn was still missing.

Pampola said that opting to go right after saying he was going left seemed the best thing to do at the time, given the nasty conditions at sea.

The chief mate said the next thing he saw was the Super Ferry at 0.8 nautical miles away, and getting closer very fast. "The Super Ferry veered to the left. I did the same when I saw it, but it was too late," he said.

Super Ferry skipper

In the marine protest he submitted to the Coast Guard, the skipper of the Super Ferry 12 maintained that the San Nicolas hit his vessel about one nautical mile northwest of the Limbones Island off the Cavite coast.

Rene Rafanan said in a statement sent by WG&A Shipping Lines, owner of the Super Ferry 12, that the San Nicolas was observed by radar about five nautical miles away at one point on the starboard bow in a "meeting" situation with the Super Ferry 12.

When the San Nicolas was about a mile away, Rafanan said he noticed that the vessel had altered its course in "an erratic manner."

Rafanan said the San Nicolas tried to cross the bow of Super Ferry 12, prompting him to maneuver to avoid a collision. Still, Rafanan said, the San Nicolas hit the port side at the midsection of the Super Ferry 12.

He said he immediately sounded the emergency alarm to prepare crew members for rescue operations and put the engine on standby. He then turned the vessel around to help retrieve survivors and recover any fatalities.

Rafanan also ordered the release of 54 life rafts and stayed on the scene until about 6 p.m. when it was cleared and granted permission to leave by the Coast Guard. He said crew members of the Super Ferry 12 were able to rescue 32 survivors and recover one fatality.

Voyage continues

The Super Ferry 12, he said, proceeded to Manila and arrived at the South Harbor's Pier 15 at about 8:45 p.m. It then replenished the life rafts and was cleared by the Coast Guard to continue its voyage to Cebu.

The vessel left Manila at about 3 a.m. yesterday and was expected to arrive in Cebu by midnight.

The Department of Health reported that only nine of the 35 survivors who were brought to different hospitals were still confined. In a statement, Health Undersecretary Antonio S. Lopez said the rest of the survivors had been sent home after they were pronounced out of danger.

Eight survivors, seven of them women, remained at the Philippine General Hospital. One of them was a 35-year-old woman who had just undergone surgery. The others are recovering in the hospital's pay ward. Another survivor, a 19-year-old man who nearly drowned, was checked for pneumonia at the Ospital ng Maynila.

Sen. Francis Pangilinan said there was laxity on the part of Marina and the Coast Guard because of the recurrence of this kind of accidents.

"If heads need to roll once again because of this new tragedy, then concrete steps should be taken and should be taken fast," Pangilinan said in a statement.

Coast Guard authorities said they saw at least two violations on the part of the San Nicolas. One, the shipping company had 12 people not listed in its manifest—a gross violation of Coast Guard regulations.

"Even when you have infants, they should have been listed," Lista said. "Even those not paying should have been listed."

Two of at least 16 people whose names were listed on tickets did not actually board the ship. "Others boarded instead," Lista said. *With reports from Christine O. Avendaño and Armand N. Nocum*

Search for collision victims called off

From page A1

sistance for each fatality.

Lt. Armando Balilo, the Coast Guard spokesperson, said authorities suspected the San Nicolas carried more passengers than its maximum capacity because the number of survivors and dead so far recovered were more than the 168 passengers and 25 crewmen on its manifest.

"We are interviewing the survivors to determine how many more are missing," Balilo said on government radio. "The vessel had sunk to the sea floor at a depth beyond the capability of the rescuers," he added.

None of the nearly 1,700 people aboard Super Ferry 12 was injured and some said they weren't aware of the collision until their ship dropped inflatable life rafts.

Survivors from the San Nicolas spoke of chaos after the accident as panicked passengers rushed to one side of the stricken vessel, causing it to capsize near the Limbones Island off Cavite, about 50 km south of Manila. "It was every man for himself," said Millet Sadang, 40. "Everybody just grabbed a life vest."

Like Balilo, Reyes also said the death toll could still rise because some passengers were not on the San Nicholas manifest.

"In this situation where the manifested figure is 192 and the casualties and survivors total more than 200, it is possible that there are passengers out there who are still missing. So the figure can still go up," Reyes, also the NDCC chair, said in a statement.

The INQUIRER learned that at least four more people remained unaccounted for, including a 40-year-old mother who lost a daughter in the tragedy.

Everyone had been accounted for, officials said, except the one "officially" missing and the three others the INQUIRER found missing.

"Officially, we have one crew man missing. But if there are families who still have not found their loved ones, I urge them to come to us," Vice Adm. Reuben Lista, chief of the Philippine Coast Guard, told reporters.

Among those who remain unaccounted for are Ma. Gloria Dalunos of Sucat, Parañaque, her househelp Jade Pensirga, Sheila Sabang of Bocaue, Bulacan, and Manilyn Bacarak of Coron, Palawan.

Gloria's daughter Regine, 10, had already been rescued, her father, Segundo Talatagud, told the INQUIRER. Gloria's other daughter, Ria, 7, died in the accident.

"We looked everywhere. We heard some survivors were dropped off in Ternate, Cavite, but Coast Guard authorities told us there was no such report," Talatagud said. "Please help me find my daughter."

Sheila Sabang also was not on the list of survivors and fatalities the Coast Guard had provided. Her sister Millet said she last saw Sheila when they jumped into the sea.

"If you have word of my sister, please let me know," Millet said.

Lista said at least three boats involving one hundred rescuers scoured Manila Bay for any sign of survivors.

"We will stop the search and rescue only when family members say 'enough,' or when we find all the survivors," he said. "We pray we will find no more bodies, only survivors. Help us pray." *Reports from AP, Luige del Puerto and Martin P. Marfil*

TWO women passengers of the MV San Nicolas who survived the tragedy embrace at Coast Guard headquarters. RANDY HORMILLOSA

Rape suspect among survivors

FATE caught up with a man who had allegedly been raping his 14-year-old daughter back home in Palawan.

The man was on his way to Manila from Coron, Palawan, when a collision with the Super Ferry 12 sank the MV San Nicolas off Cavite on Sunday morning.

Still soaked and stunned by the hellish experience at sea, the suspect was arrested by Task Force Jericho of the Department of the Interior and Local Government at the back of the Manila Hotel, according to a DILG report.

Jericho Chief Manuel Cabigon said his men were actually waiting for the man after the girl went to his office on May 22. She accused her father of raping her since she was in Grade 6.

When he heard of the tragedy, Cabigon said he immediately coordinated with the Coast Guard to help arrest the suspect.

From Coast Guard headquarters, the suspect was brought to the Department of Justice where he was charged with rape.

Christian V. Esguerra

Cops link top bomber . . .

From page A1

ratist Moro Islamic Liberation Front's Special Operations Group, adding that he could be a crucial link between the MILF and foreign Muslim extremists.

President Macapagal-Arroyo confirmed Yunos' arrest on Sunday and congratulated the Philippine National Police. "They all worked hard to put this all together. The war against terror is making very, very good progress," she said.

But the MILF on Monday disavowed all links with Yunos, the main suspect in a series of bombings in Manila in December 2000 that left 22 people dead and 100 others wounded.

"Yunos is not an MILF member or a leader of the so-called Special Operations Group and the MILF has no links with him or to the Egyptian man," MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu said.

Kabalu was referring to Al Gabre Mahmud, an Egyptian Islamic missionary who was arrested with Yunos as they tried to catch a flight to Manila at the Lumbia Airport. Authorities became suspicious when an ambulance pulled over and delivered Yunos, who wore bandages covering his face and a plaster cast on a leg as part of a disguise.

Chief Supt. Jesus Verzosa, police intelligence director, said a check was being made whether the Egyptian was on the international terrorist watchlist. The Egyptian Embassy could not be reached for comment on Monday.

But Kabalu insisted that the 12,500-strong rebel group was not engaged in terrorism. "We are revolutionaries fighting for a legitimate cause. We are fighting for freedom," he said.

The MILF has been fighting for a separate Islamic state in Mindanao since 1978. The government last week intensified a military crackdown on the MILF in response to attacks that have killed more than 210 people this year. Manila has long suspected the MILF is receiving support from abroad.

Jemaah Islamiah

Police intelligence officials also said Yunos was among coddlers and trainers of such groups as the Jemaah Islamiah, the alleged Southeast Asian branch of al-Qaida. Jemaah Islamiah has been blamed for several bombing plots, including last year's attacks in Bali, Indonesia, which killed 202 people.

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"If he were not arrested, he could have done more terrible things here," said PNP Deputy Director General Reynaldo Velasco.

A Manila court has issued an arrest warrant on Yunos in connection with the Rizal Day bombings. *Reports from AP, AFP and Christian V. Esguerra*

Marcos Day bill approved by House body

From page A1

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Weather forecaster Aida Bayaca said poor visibility caused by the storm probably contributed to Sunday's ferry collision on Manila Bay that left scores of people dead and missing.

Florentino Tesoro, Pagasa officer in charge, said Chedeng had triggered the onset of the southwest monsoon (*habagat*) season in the country.

The rainy season is expected to peak in July, gradually receding in August and ending in September. *Gerald G. Lacuarta, with a report from AFP*

‘Another black eye in maritime safety’

From page A1

The San Nicolas and Super Ferry 12 were equipped with radio and radar. The much bigger Super Ferry 12 even had a GPS (global positioning system) but it still collided with the wooden-hulled San Nicolas, apparently due to miscommunication.

Vice Adm. Reuben Lista said the accident could have been avoided as the boats had communications equipment and were in the open sea.

Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes, concurrent head of the civil defense office, suggested that officers on both vessels had maneuvered to avoid a head-on collision amid a tropical storm.

"The maneuver was not executed perfectly," he said on television, citing preliminary testimony from the San Nicolas captain who survived.

"They should have been forewarned earlier about the coming of each other. I understand too that visibility was quite impaired," Reyes said.

No response

The chief mate of the San Nicolas said the Super Ferry 12 did not respond to repeated calls over VHF radio, causing him to change direction twice, first to the right, then to the left.

But by then it was already too late, he said.

Under the International Rules and Regulation for Preventing Collision at Sea, or what is known as the "rules of the road," a silent response means "go ahead."

"*Pagkatapos noon, bumulaga na lang ang Super Ferry sa harap namin* (After that, the Super Ferry suddenly appeared in front of us)," Ernesto Pampola, 52, chief mate of the San Nicolas, told the INQUIRER.

The statement, among others, is contained in the official marine protest that the San Nicolas management filed with the Philippine Coast Guard yesterday afternoon. The marine protest is the official account of a ship on any accident, however minor.

Pampola's version of events confirms to some degree other accounts of what happened, particularly the now widely held belief that the San Nicolas miscalculated and hit the left rear portion of Super Ferry 12.

Radar screen

"It was zero visibility," Pampola recounted. "I could see an object on the radar screen, but I could not see the body.

"I radioed: 'Meeting vessel. Let's go port to port (meaning veer to the left). There was no response. I then changed my mind and went starboard to starboard instead," he said.

But a survivor, Cherry Bacarak, told the INQUIRER that she could see vessels miles away. *"Maalon pero kita namin malayo pa iyong Super Ferry. Sumigaw kami, 'Mababangga tayo'* (The sea was choppy but we could see the Super Ferry. We shouted, 'We will be hit')," Bacarak said.

She said her daughter Manilyn was still missing.

Pampola said that opting to go right after saying he was going left seemed the best thing to do at the time, given the nasty conditions at sea.

The chief mate said the next thing he saw was the Super Ferry at 0.8 nautical miles away, and getting closer very fast. "The Super Ferry veered to the left. I did the same when I saw it, but it was too late," he said.

Super Ferry skipper

In the marine protest he submitted to the Coast Guard, the skipper of the Super Ferry 12 maintained that the San Nicolas hit his vessel about one nautical mile northwest of the Limbones Island off the Cavite coast.

Rene Rafanan said in a statement sent by WG&A Shipping Lines, owner of the Super Ferry 12, that the San Nicolas was observed by radar about five nautical miles away at one point on the starboard bow in a "meeting" situation with the Super Ferry 12.

When the San Nicolas was about a mile away, Rafanan said he noticed that the vessel had altered its course in "an erratic manner."

Rafanan said the San Nicolas tried to cross the bow of Super Ferry 12, prompting him to maneuver to avoid a collision. Still, Rafanan said, the San Nicolas hit the port side at the midsection of the Super Ferry 12.

He said he immediately sounded the emergency alarm to prepare crew members for rescue operations and put the engine on standby. He then turned the vessel around to help retrieve survivors and recover any fatalities.

Rafanan also ordered the release of 54 life rafts and stayed on the scene until about 6 p.m. when it was cleared and granted permission to leave by the Coast Guard. He said crew members of the Super Ferry 12 were able to rescue 32 survivors and recover one fatality.

Voyage continues

The Super Ferry 12, he said, proceeded to Manila and arrived at the South Harbor's Pier 15 at about 8:45 p.m. It then replenished the life rafts and was cleared by the Coast Guard to continue its voyage to Cebu.

The vessel left Manila at about 3 a.m. yesterday and was expected to arrive in Cebu by midnight.

The Department of Health reported that only nine of the 35 survivors who were brought to different hospitals were still confined. In a statement, Health Undersecretary Antonio S. Lopez said the rest of the survivors had been sent home after they were pronounced out of danger.

Eight survivors, seven of them women, remained at the Philippine General Hospital. One of them was a 35-year-old woman who had just undergone surgery. The others are recovering in the hospital's pay ward. Another survivor, a 19-year-old man who nearly drowned, was checked for pneumonia at the Ospital ng Maynila.

Sen. Francis Pangilinan said there was laxity on the part of Marina and the Coast Guard because of the recurrence of this kind of accidents.

"If heads need to roll once again because of this new tragedy, then concrete steps should be taken and should be taken fast," Pangilinan said in a statement.

Coast Guard authorities said they saw at least two violations on the part of the San Nicolas. One, the shipping company had 12 people not listed in its manifest—a gross violation of Coast Guard regulations.

"Even when you have infants, they should have been listed," Lista said. "Even those not paying should have been listed."

Two of at least 16 people whose names were listed on tickets did not actually board the ship. "Others boarded instead," Lista said. *With reports from Christine O. Avendaño and Armand N. Nocum*

Search for collision victims called off

From page A1

sistance for each fatality.

Lt. Armando Balilo, the Coast Guard spokesperson, said authorities suspected the San Nicolas carried more passengers than its maximum capacity because the number of survivors and dead so far recovered were more than the 168 passengers and 25 crewmen on its manifest.

"We are interviewing the survivors to determine how many more are missing," Balilo said on government radio. "The vessel had sunk to the sea floor at a depth beyond the capability of the rescuers," he added.

None of the nearly 1,700 people aboard Super Ferry 12 was injured and some said they weren't aware of the collision until their ship dropped inflatable life rafts.

Survivors from the San Nicolas spoke of chaos after the accident as panicked passengers rushed to one side of the stricken vessel, causing it to capsize near the Limbones Island off Cavite, about 50 km south of Manila. "It was every man for himself," said Millet Sadang, 40. "Everybody just grabbed a life vest."

Like Balilo, Reyes also said the death toll could still rise because some passengers were not on the San Nicholas manifest.

"In this situation where the manifested figure is 192 and the casualties and survivors total more than 200, it is possible that there are passengers out there who are still missing. So the figure can still go up," Reyes, also the NDCC chair, said in a statement.

The INQUIRER learned that at least four more people remained unaccounted for, including a 40-year-old mother who lost a daughter in the tragedy.

Everyone had been accounted for, officials said, except the one "officially" missing and the three others the INQUIRER found missing.

"Officially, we have one crew man missing. But if there are families who still have not found their loved ones, I urge them to come to us," Vice Adm. Reuben Lista, chief of the Philippine Coast Guard, told reporters.

Among those who remain unaccounted for are Ma. Gloria Dalunos of Sucat, Parañaque, her househelp Jade Pensirga, Sheila Sabang of Bocaue, Bulacan, and Manilyn Bacarak of Coron, Palawan.

Gloria's daughter Regine, 10, had already been rescued, her father, Segundo Talatagud, told the INQUIRER. Gloria's other daughter, Ria, 7, died in the accident.

"We looked everywhere. We heard some survivors were dropped off in Ternate, Cavite, but Coast Guard authorities told us there was no such report," Talatagud said. "Please help me find my daughter."

Sheila Sabang also was not on the list of survivors and fatalities the Coast Guard had provided. Her sister Millet said she last saw Sheila when they jumped into the sea.

"If you have word of my sister, please let me know," Millet said.

Lista said at least three boats involving one hundred rescuers scoured Manila Bay for any sign of survivors.

"We will stop the search and rescue only when family members say 'enough,' or when we find all the survivors," he said. "We pray we will find no more bodies, only survivors. Help us pray." *Reports from AP, Luige del Puerto and Martin P. Marfil*

TWO women passengers of the MV San Nicolas who survived the tragedy embrace at Coast Guard headquarters. RANDY HORMILLOSA

Rape suspect among survivors

FATE caught up with a man who had allegedly been raping his 14-year-old daughter back home in Palawan.

The man was on his way to Manila from Coron, Palawan, when a collision with the Super Ferry 12 sank the MV San Nicolas off Cavite on Sunday morning.

Still soaked and stunned by the hellish experience at sea, the suspect was arrested by Task Force Jericho of the Department of the Interior and Local Government at the back of the Manila Hotel, according to a DILG report.

Jericho Chief Manuel Cabigon said his men were actually waiting for the man after the girl went to his office on May 22. She accused her father of raping her since she was in Grade 6.

When he heard of the tragedy, Cabigon said he immediately coordinated with the Coast Guard to help arrest the suspect.

From Coast Guard headquarters, the suspect was brought to the Department of Justice where he was charged with rape.

Christian V. Esguerra

Cops link top bomber . . .

From page A1

ratist Moro Islamic Liberation Front's Special Operations Group, adding that he could be a crucial link between the MILF and foreign Muslim extremists.

President Macapagal-Arroyo confirmed Yunos' arrest on Sunday and congratulated the Philippine National Police. "They all worked hard to put this all together. The war against terror is making very, very good progress," she said.

But the MILF on Monday disavowed all links with Yunos, the main suspect in a series of bombings in Manila in December 2000 that left 22 people dead and 100 others wounded.

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The MILF has been fighting for a separate Islamic state in Mindanao since 1978. The government last week intensified a military crackdown on the MILF in response to attacks that have killed more than 210 people this year. Manila has long suspected the MILF is receiving support from abroad.

Jemaah Islamiah

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The rainy season is expected to peak in July, gradually receding in August and ending in September. *Gerald G. Lacuarta, with a report from AFP*

THE BRP Ilocos Norte to the rescue is shown in this ABS-CBN TV grab.

Hi-tech rescue ship proves its worth

By Luige del Puerto

DR. RAYMUND Cayabyab was nursing a slight fever and resting at home when Dr. Reynaldo Agcanas called him up to inform him about a major boat accident, saying his help was needed.

Cayabyab said he did not think twice about attending to the emergency. He even brought along his wife Debbie, who is also a physician, and left their children at a cousin's house.

The couple and Agcanas were among the scores of people who came to Coast Guard headquarters in Manila to help examine the survivors of Sunday's tragedy at sea. Some arrived as early as 7 p.m. to set up medical stations. Many stayed until the wee hours of the morning.

"Many of those we checked were okay," Debbie said. "We referred a pregnant woman for further evaluation and another who had slight bruises."

Plain biscuits

The majority of those who heeded the call for assistance were members of the Philippine Coast Guard Auxiliary (PCGA), a paramilitary search-and-rescue group which had been at the forefront of many sea accidents in the country.

They had only biscuits and mineral water the whole night, but most of them were too busy to even take a nibble.

"For all of you who came to help, I thank you," Vice Adm. Reuben Lista told them at around 1 a.m.

As of press time yesterday, at least three more boats were scouring the mouth of Manila Bay, looking for survivors even though officially, only one person has been declared missing.

;The crewmen and rescuers in the boats were the Navy and Coast Guard's best. Some of them had not slept for hours, Lista said.

"We are not stopping the rescue effort until the last survivor is found," he said.

No doubt danger exists for those who are now at sea. The weather has been anything but helpful, officials familiar with the effort said.

A rescue officer said visibility was very limited because of the heavy rains. "Our boats are equipped with radar, but the rains are terrible," he said.

BRP Ilocos Norte

One of the boats which was forced to sail the other day even though technically it could still not fly the Philippine flag (and therefore had no authority to sail) was the BRP Ilocos Norte.

Yet a day before it was officially commissioned, the latest state-of-the-art search-and-rescue vessel of the Philippine Coast Guard proved its worth when it helped save some 70 passengers of the MV San Nicolas.

The boat was finally commissioned yesterday in a fitting ceremony at the Coast Guard headquarters.

"We had to negotiate with the contractor of the vessel over its use because it was not yet commissioned," the captain of the vessel said. "If it got wrecked, the Coast Guard wouldn't have had to pay anything. But yes, it was fast," he said.

"I'm very proud of the vessel," Robert Salteri, executive officer of Tenix Defense Shipbuilder of Australia which designed it, said.

The 10.7-meter (35-foot) BRP Ilocos Norte is equipped with high-tech apparatus for rapid recovery of survivors and coordination of rescue operations. At top speed, it can reach 24 knots.

It is the second of six rescue ships, worth roughly $75 million, expected to be delivered this year. The Philippine government has paid only P200 million, which explained the contractor's initial discomfort over using the boat when it had not been commissioned.

Survivors' tales raise hopes for missing kin

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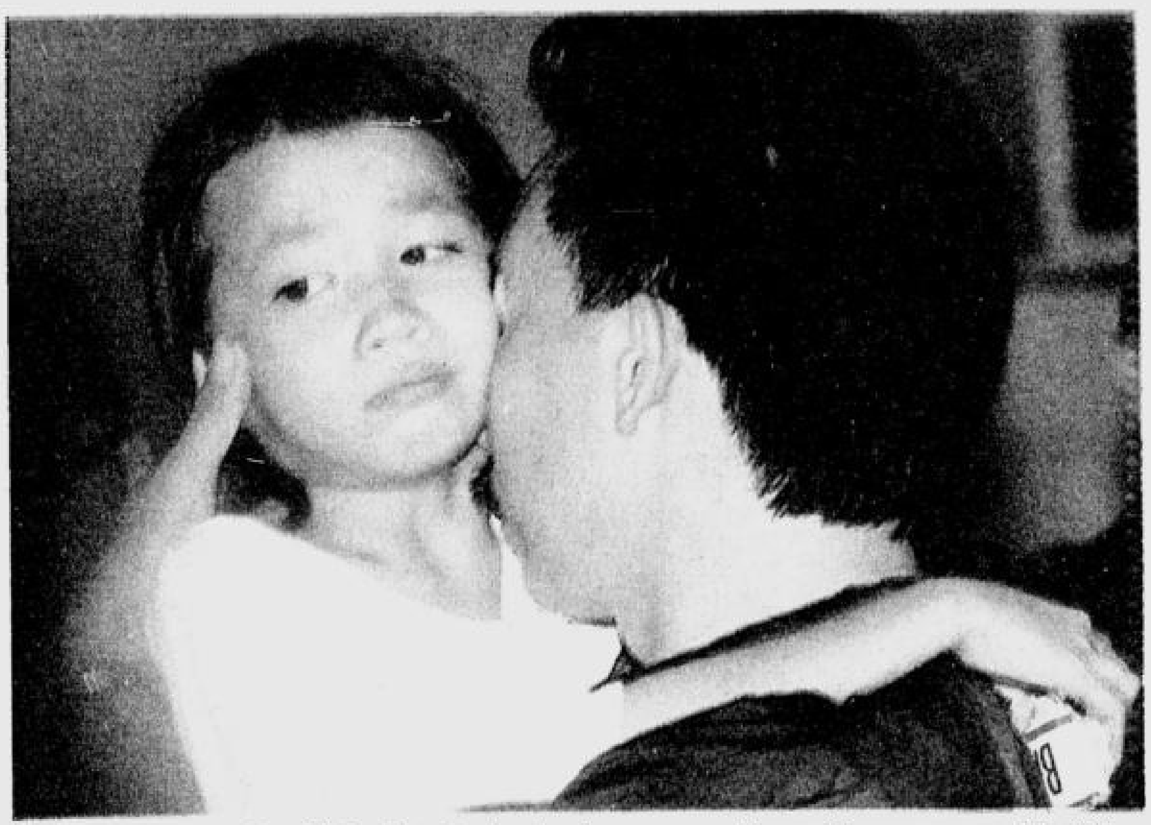


BOYET Dimaano comforts his daughter Stephanie, who was among the surviving passengers of the MV San Nicolas.

RANDY HORMILLOSA

"They just went to see their grandparents in Palawan. I couldn't believe it when I heard their boat sank," he said.

When Boyet saw Genevive and Gaylyn, he hugged them and cried. "Thank God you are all right. I love you so much," he told them.

"I lost Stephanie," Genevive said over and over again. "Don't worry. You said she has a life vest. She is all right. She is just with another ship," he consoled her.

True enough, Stephanie emerged from a throng of survivors three hours later.

Coast Guard officials, doctors, nurses and reporters cheered while the four embraced each other.

Stephanie said fishermen found her floating with a life vest in Manila Bay, and turned her over to Coast Guard rescue teams. She was brought to Pier 15, that was why they couldn't find her at the Coast Guard headquarters.

Niko Palau also survived, along with 182 others. She was rushed to the Philippine General Hospital because of minor injuries. The INQUIRER reported yesterday that her brother Peter had not heard anything from her.

Others not lucky

Yet others are not so lucky. Antonia Ruiz waited and waited for her son, Steve, 21. He was not coming back.

Yesterday, Steve was listed as dead.

"She just went to see his wife, who is from Palawan," the mother said.

Eight-year-old Bien Ampiloquio also died.

Bien was with his mother Recy Ann, cousin Jo Mari and aunt Susan Bautista on the MV San Nicolas.

The boy's family couldn't say much when it learned of the news. "Bien is dead," his uncle Alex said.

All that 8-year-old Kristel Barot had ever wanted was to visit the wake of her father and see him for the last time. But her relatives fear that she had joined him instead.

As of press time, Barot was among the passengers who remained missing.

"She was very depressed when we left Palawan upon learning that her father had been killed. He was shot to death by a still unidentified suspect," said Loreto Nerpio, 43, Barot's uncle.

"We're not losing hope but we're also preparing ourselves that she had joined her father in heaven," Nerpio said, bursting into tears as he revealed that his wife Eunice, 43, and son Joseph, 17, were among the fatalities in the country's latest sea tragedy.

Nerpio, together with his 5-year-old daughter Mary Lorice, was among the survivors of the sea collision.

A municipal employee in Coron, Palawan, Nerpio said he did not let go of his daughter's hand when the five of them, with life vests on, jumped from the sinking boat into the sea. Unfortunately, Eunice, who was clutching Barot to her chest, was swept away by the giant waves.

Nerpio recalled that Joseph, the eldest of his four children, had even volunteered to get his mother when he saw that she and Kristel had been tugged by the strong waves.

"'*Ako na lang*, Dad. *Kaya ko na kunin si* mommy," Nerpio quoted his son as saying.

Good swimmer

"I was very confident that they, too, would be saved since my wife and my son were very good swimmers," Nerpio said in between sobs. "A very good swimmer. In fact, she was a member of the varsity swimming team during her college days at the Araneta University."

Nerpio, along with several of his relatives, had nice words for Joseph, a transferee at the University of the East in Caloocan taking up electrical engineering. Nerpio said his son had just spent a two-week vacation in Palawan.

"He's such a bright and nice guy. I know he would have had a good future," said Nerpio of his son, who used to be a scholar at the Mindanao State University in Iligan.

Prior to the tragedy, at around 2 a.m., Nerpio revealed that the MV San Nicolas nearly overturned at least five times because of the strong waves.

But he said the wooden boat's crew just told them to relax and assured them that everything would be all right.

He added that he, along with the other passengers, did not take chances as they all grabbed the life jackets.

"We would have safely reached the shores as we were only a few miles away from an island were it not for the collision."

The survivors were one in saying that they were caught off-guard upon seeing the Super Ferry 12 in front of them after hearing a loud thud.

"*Basta may bigla na lang bumangga sa barko namin. Nagulat na lang kami nandon na yung* Super Ferry *sa harap namin. Tapos tuloy-tuloy na lumubog kami*," Nerpio said.

Mothers, children crying

"I felt pity for people I saw around me in the water. Some of them were crying and asking 'Where are my children?" Nerpio said.

The children were crying out for their parents.

Some passengers charged that the boat's crew remained complacent and did not even warn them that the boat would sink.

Roger de la Cruz, 41, of Dasmariñas, Cavite, survived but lost his only daughter Recia, 9, to the tragedy. De la Cruz survived with his wife Cora, 35, and sons Raniel, 6, and Renzo, 3.

"The (boat's) crew even got mad as we were getting the life vests when the boat nearly overturned. They wanted us to put the vests back," De la Cruz said.

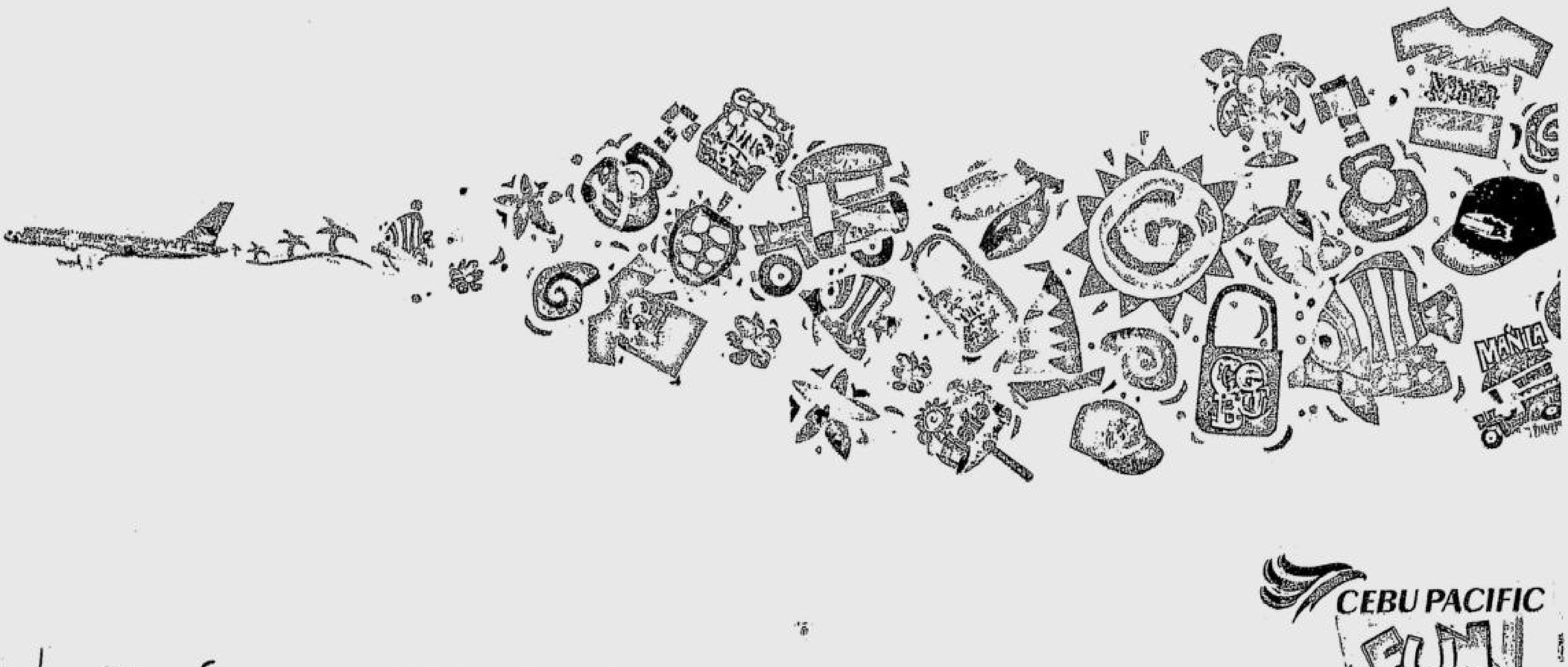
He said that his children had just spent their summer vacation at his in-laws' house in Palawan and that they had decided to come back in time for the school opening in June.

"She was even excited to shop for her school supplies," said De la Cruz of her eldest child, who was supposed to be an incoming Grade 4 student.

Twenty-three of the 25 confirmed casualties in the sea accident were brought to the Ambassador Funeral Homes in Caloocan City.

They were Marlyn Gopez, Steve Ruiz, Arlene Chua, Remedios Tecson, Pancho Quindoza, Melody Albin, Tarcipio Daboc, Norberto Custodio, Wilgin Abrera, Anacita Apuya, Zack Laurence Favillaran, Nathaniel Favillaran and Avecin Fabrero.

The others were Anthony Fabrero, Flavia Alabro, Merlita Mendoza, Roel Bering Jr., Ria Dalonos, Leticia Fuentes, Pricila Libutan, Eunice Nerpio, Joseph Varon Nerpio and Recia de la Cruz.



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- There will be 3 winners per flight.

Per DTI-Region VII Permit No. 056, Series of 2003

Tanod on motorbike flees after hitting Inquirer editor

By Leila B. Salaverria

INQUIRER editor Antonio Bergonia broke his left leg last Sunday after he was struck by a motorcycle-riding Barangay Bayan Tanod in front of the Philippine Daily Inquirer building in Makati City.

Bergonia, who edits and closes the Inquirer's Across the Nation section, had gone earlier to the Inquirer office on Chino Roces Avenue to submit a special report.

Bergonia's wife Nancy said her husband had left the office and then had decided to go back when the *tanod*, who was driving toward J.P. Rizal Street, hit him at around 1:30 p.m.

Police said the motorcycle (SJ-6729) was being driven by Bantay Bayan Tanod Cecilio Pamintuan, who also fell off his bike during the impact.

Pamintuan, who drove off toward Mascardo Street, has yet to surface and submit his statement to the police.

Police said Bergonia fell due to the impact and his head hit the pavement. He also broke his left leg.

Bergonia was taken to the Makati Medical Center by EMP Taxi driver Rolando Enriquez.

SPO2 Carlos Gonda said the motorcycle is owned by Barangay Tejeros and is issued to Kagawad Edwin Castillo.

Castillo, however, told police that Pamintuan had been the one driving the motorcycle at the time of the incident.

The investigator added that the Makati Public Safety Department will look for Pamintuan.

Mayors adopt flood control measures

By Jerome Aning and Nelson Flores

METRO Manila mayors have begun implementing flood control measures with the arrival of the rainy season.

In Manila, Mayor Lito Atienza yesterday said he has ordered a number of city government agencies to undertake the necessary measures to minimize or prevent flooding in the capital.

Atienza said that throughout the summer months, the city engineer's office and the department of public services under Armand Andres and Rafael Borromeo have been conducting clearing and declogging of waterways such as canals and drainages.

The mayor said low-lying areas such as Sampaloc as well as those located near Manila Bay and along the esteros would probably still experience flooding especially when there is extraordinary amount of rainfall. But he said he expects to be not of the same magnitude as last year.

In Cainta, Mayor Nicanor Felix yesterday asked the Department of Public Works and Highways for the immediate construction of flood water interceptors to minimize flooding in the municipality.

Felix said the DPWH should build the interceptors—like the ones on Sumulong Highway in Marikina City—in the town's flood-prone areas of San Isidro and San Juan.

He said that San Isidro and San Juan act as catch basins of Antipolo City. But he hoped that the interceptors would prevent that from happening.

PHILIPPINES
THAILAND

CHARMERS REUTERS

Miss Philippines Carla Gay Balingit and Miss Thailand Yaowalak Traisurat pose at the pool of the Panama Hotel in Panama, where the Miss Universe 2003 pageant will be broadcast live to 600 million viewers in 176 countries.

Environmentalists slam MMDA plan to uproot trees

By Leila Salaverria

AN ENVIRONMENT group yesterday criticized the Metro Manila Development Authority's plan to remove the island—and the trees planted in it—on Katipunan Avenue in order to decongest traffic in the area.

According to Ester Perez de Tagle, founder of the Concerned Citizens Against Pollution (Cocap), the removal of the trees would bring more harm than good because the trees provide oxygen and help bring fresh air to the area.

"Removing the trees will deprive us of clean air," she said. "We need the trees because they absorb carbon dioxide and have a cooling effect."

Aside from these, trees also play a vital part in preventing flooding because their roots absorb water, the Cocap founder said.

She added that the trees provide shade and protection for pedestrians. So, instead of removing them, the MMDA should plant more of them to encourage people to use the sidewalks, as is the case in more advanced countries.

Perez de Tagle said that she disagreed with the MMDA when it said that the removal of the islands and the trees would ease traffic congestion in the area.

"The traffic (congestion) is only temporary, it only happens when school opens in the morning and when it lets out in the afternoon," she said.

What would really help ease the traffic jams, she added, is the removal of illegally parked vehicles on Katipunan Avenue and the arrest of drivers who violate traffic rules.

Perez de Tagle also expressed dismay that the MMDA did not even consult the community about the decision to remove the island and the trees in it. She pointed out that the trees were planted by various sectors of the community—students, businessmen and residents in the area—and that they should have had a say in the decision.

"He's very fascistic," the Cocap founder said of MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando.

She also said the plan was done "deceptively" because there had been no announcement or warning before it was implemented.

But MMDA Traffic Operations Center Director Angelito Vergel de Dios said the decision to relocate the trees on the island is "a matter of choice between the function of the road as a carriageway and as a park."

"Trees belong to parks, not in the middle of roads," he said yesterday, adding that when the trees on the island become bigger, they will cause the roadway to crack.

As for claims that the island don't need to be removed, the traffic director said they are a cause of traffic congestion, not just because they take up space on the road but because, by acting as a "separator," they encourage people to park in the area closest to the curb.

He also said that making vehicles travel faster by lessening traffic congestion actually reduces air pollution because the vehicles then emit less smoke.

Vergel de Dios also belied Perez de Tagle's statement that Katipunan traffic is sporadic.

"We receive so many complaints about the traffic on Katipunan," he said, adding that the MMDA wanted to remove the island in time for the school opening in June.

He added that the MMDA is just doing its job to ease traffic congestion in Metro Manila.

METROBRIEFS

Slain in QC robbery

CECILLO Exclamado was killed when he tried to stop a pair of robbers in Quezon City early yesterday morning. Police said Exclamado, 51, of Dagat-dagatan, Navotas, was walking on Col. Martirez Street, Heroes Hill, at around 9:30 a.m. when he saw the culprits snatch the handbag of Aster Alunday before fleeing on board a tricycle. Exclamado tried to cut off the robbers' escape route by closing the gate of the subdivision. But the suspect rammed the gate, which hit the head of Exclamado. He died on the way to the Quezon City General Hospital, said PO1 Joseph Madrid of the Central Police District. *Alcuin Papa*

Killed in Pasig City

RENATO Lavio, 44, on Sunday night had just finished his porridge when two unidentified men stabbed him to death in a dimly lighted portion of Ortigas Avenue in Barangay Rosario, Pasig City, police said. After stabbing the victim in the chest, Lavio's assailants casually walked away, said PO3 Enrique Jimenez. Bystanders took him to the Rizal Medical Center where he was pronounced dead. Witnesses said Jimenez was killed right after he and his companion paid for their meals at around 11 p.m. *Nelson Flores*

Stabbed in Batasan Hills

LABORER Erick Jimenez, 34, was killed, while his uncle, Agapito, 43, a driver, was wounded when their drinking companion, Dennis Roco, lost an argument and went on a stabbing spree in Batasan Hills, Quezon City on Sunday. Police said the three men were drinking in front of Jimenez's house at around 6:30 p.m. when the suspect got into a heated argument with the victims. After a while, Roco left the scene and came back with a bladed weapon in hand. The suspect then stabbed the victims and fled. The two men were taken to the East Avenue Medical Center. Erick died on arrival, police said.

Alcuin Papa

Truck hijacked in Manila

LESS than a week after he was hired, truck driver Lito Saladaga allegedly hijacked some P400,000 worth of refined VMC sugar which he was supposed to deliver to the the ICY Harbor Center at the North Harbor in Tondo, Manila last Sunday. The city police's theft and robbery section said Saladaga, of Vitas, Tondo, allegedly left Harbor Link at around 2 p.m. Saturday and did not return. The suspect was driving a red 10-wheel Isuzu truck (TWB-696), with body number 52, Harbor Link official Romeo Eseo said. *Jerome Aning*

UP homecoming

THE U.P. Alumni Association has scheduled the U.P. General Alumni-Faculty Homecoming and Reunion at the Ang Bahay ng Alumni, Diliman Campus, Quezon City on Saturday, June 21, at 4 p.m. All U.P. alumni and faculty are invited to attend, especially members of Class 1943 (Diamond Jubilarians), Class 1953 (Golden Jubilarians), Class 1963 (Ruby Jubilarians), and Class 1978 (Silver Jubilarians). For more information, contact the UPAA Secretariat at telephone numbers: (632) 929-8327; (632) 920-6875; (632) 920-6871 or (632) 920-6868, or e-mail at: up.alum.assn@pacific.net.ph.

'How can you accept your son is dying?'

By Luige del Puerto

LIFE has played a cruel trick on Jose Emmanuel "Joma" Mangulabnan, an athletic boy who dreams of becoming a soldier.

In April last year, Joma, 11, was diagnosed suffering from acute lymphocytic leukemia.

He has been undergoing chemotherapy since then, but has relapsed twice already. His only hope is a bone marrow transplant, according to his doctors. Joma will only have about a year to live without the procedure.

Last May 5, Joma's older brother, Jose Iñigo, a full scholar at the PREF Southridge School for Boys in Alabang had asked President Macapa-gal-Arroyo for help for Joma.

Ms Macapagal is Jose's benefactor, and scholars at the academy are required to write the person who shoulders their expenses every year to express their gratitude.

In his letter of thanks to the President, Jose asked her for a small favor.

"Madam, I am willing to forego my scholarship if you can only help my brother get a bone marrow transplant," he wrote. So far, there has been no reply from Malacañang.

MANGULABNAN

Joma's father, Rommel, earns about P8,000 a month as a contractual worker at the Light Rail Transit system.

The bone marrow transplant costs about P1.5 million. This means Rommel would have to work and save everything he earns for the next 15 years to pay for Joma's treatment.

But Joma's condition is deteriorating fast. His body is starting to reject medication.

"Someone told me I should think of my other children, too," Rommel told the INQUIRER. "He was implying that Joma's case is hopeless. But how could I accept that? How could you accept the fact that your son is dying?"

Rommel said they had sold everything of value for Joma's medications. They are now selling their land in Batangas, but there have been no takers.

Nancy, Joma's mom, said the most difficult part of her day is when she looks at her son, knowing the fate that awaits him if he does not get the transplant soon.

"*Napakalambing ni* Joma (Joma is so affectionate)," she said.

Joma's body hairs have fallen off because of chemotherapy. He wants to live, but he's terrified of what is happening to him.

"If I get well, if someone will help me and I grow old, I won't marry," he told the INQUIRER. "I'm afraid my son or daughter will get sick like me. I don't want my child to go through this. *Aalagaan ko na lang si* Papa at Mama (I will just take care of my papa and mama)."

Joma's physician, Dr. Alendry Caviles of the Dr. Fe del Mundo Medical Center Foundation of the Philippines, said Joma understands his situation. "He is a fighter."

His family can be reached at (0917) 471-8647 or at 551-2959 and 804-0595.

Shot right in the head

From page A18

Sanchez said.

Police were able to catch up with the suspect and his victim at the East Service Road in Sucat, just in front of Liberty Homes Subdivision, Barangay Cupang.

On the service road, a police car deliberately hit the vehicle of the victim. In the ensuing confusion, PO2 Bonifacio Aquino of the Special Weapons and Tactics unit got a clear shot and fired on the suspect, hitting him in the head, Sanchez said.

Police said the victim only sustained bruises on her neck and arms.

Sanchez said the man was dark skinned and stood at about 5-foot-5. The man had no identification card with him.

His body remained unclaimed at the morgue, police said.

Panic grips bather over 'skin' ...

From page A18

1525-mm diameter mainline, where Diaz's remains are lodged, has already been isolated from the rest of the water system.

He also said that Mandaluyong was "too far" from Project 2 in Quezon City where Diaz fell.

Nevertheless, Lacsamana reported that the alleged body part had already been sent to the San Lazaro Hospital for analysis.

"Experts from the Department of Health will do a biopsy on it. We hope to get their findings tomorrow. It's just too premature to speculate right now if the specimen was indeed a part of Mr. Diaz's body," Lacsamana said.

He also said that the DOH has also conducted another test on the water being distributed in Mandaluyong and found it safe for drinking.

Money courier slain in robbery

By Jerome Aning

THREE men on a motorcycle robbed and killed a 56-year-old money courier of a restaurant chain in Malate, Manila yesterday morning.

Police said Antonio Jeramos, who worked for the Lorenzo J. Cruz Group of Restaurants, which include Cafe Adriatico, Cafe Havana, Bistro Remedios, In the Mood disco and Mil Nueve Cientos, was carrying around P500,000 of the company's money and was waiting for a ride at Remedios corner J. Bocobo streets at around 9:30 a.m. when the suspects struck.

PO3 Paul Dennis Javier said the robbers shot the victim when he tried to resist.

Jeramos was pronounced dead at the Ospital ng Maynila, police said.

PO3 Javier said the messenger was supposed to deposit the cash collection at the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corp. at the Royal Twin Towers on Remedios, according to LJC accountant Virginia Abainza, 46.

Scrap CAT, militants urge solons

By Jerome Aning

MILITANT students yesterday called on legislators to pass a law that would abolish the Citizens' Army Training program in high school.

The National Union of Students of the Philippines also urged the authorities, especially Department of Education officials, to lobby for the abolition of the CAT and its replacement with "an optional, acceptable and knowledge-enhancing community service program."

NUSP president Raymond Palatino said the continuing implementation of the CAT is "irrelevant and a big waste of time and money" since the Reserve Officer Training Corps course in college has already been replaced by the National Service Training Program two years ago.

"It is high time to replace an out-of-date and unnecessary military training course," he said. "CAT is only a nuisance and distraction to learning."

The NTSP was implemented in response to the clamor of college student to make military training an optional program.

Aklanons in MM to hold gala night

THE ARCHBISHOP Gabriel M. Reyes Memorial Foundation Inc., the association of Aklanons residing in Metro Manila, will hold its 26th annual "Binayle" or benefit gala dinner dance on May 31, at 7 p.m. at the Century Park Hotel.

The program includes the swearing in of the new set of officers headed by its president, Arturo Alejandrino, as well as the induction of new members.

Founded in 1977, the Foundation is the biggest and oldest running non-government organization serving the people of Aklan.

For inquiries, call Janet at 718-1188, Ellie at 842-8606, or Bernard at 530-8474.

METRO

E-mail: pr_metro@inquirer.com.ph

Editor **Abelardo S. Ulanday**

FOUR DIGIT
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(In exact order)

SUERTRES
4 1 0

MEGALOTTO 6/45
10 12 15 17 29 40

Shot right in the head

Cops kill hostage taker; mom, child saved unhurt

By Christian Esguerra

POLICE on Sunday shot and killed a suspected car thief who took hostage a woman and her child at the parking lot of a mall in Muntinlupa City.

A crack shot of the local police's Special Weapons and Tactics unit, shot the unidentified suspect in the head, ending the hour-long ordeal of Regina Salve Losoriaga, 35, manager of the bridal department of Shopwise at the Festival Mall in Alabang, according to Muntinlupa city officials.

Armed with two fan knives, the suspect snatched the victim and her 7-year-old child, when she refused to yield her silver Mitsubishi Lancer (XGL-247) at the parking lot of the Festival Mall at around 11:30 p.m., said city police chief Erasto Lim Sanchez.

Police successfully negotiated the release of the child, but the suspect later forced Losoriaga, a resident of Posadas Village in Alabang, to take the wheel and drive toward the South Luzon Tollways, Sanchez said.

At knifepoint, the victim drove the car and entered the Sucat Interchange.

But the suspect did not know that the police earlier punched holes in the vehicle's rear tires,

SHOT/A17

COLD COVER Two street-children shiver in the cold as rains Monday pelt their shanty made of scrap woods and cartons along the NIA Road in Quezon City, a known community of squatters in Metro Manila.

JOAN BONDOC

Killers strike in Taguig as heavy rains fall

By Leila B. Salaverria

SUSPECTED robbers took advantage of heavy rains yesterday by barging into a Taguig home and killing a couple and critically injured their 13-year-old daughter.

Police said Florencio and Fe Dimaguila and their adopted daughter, Joya Pama, were stabbed and repeatedly hit with a lead pipe inside their home, which also doubles as a hardware store, along Dra. Natividad Avenue in Barangay Natindan.

According to PO1 Rolly Concepcion, the neighbors of the victims noticed that the hardware store was open at around 10 a.m. but there was no one manning it. They then called the police.

When police went to the house to investigate, they found the bloodied bodies of the victims in one room.

Joya Pama suffered multiple injuries including a stab wound on her neck, but was still alive. She was rushed to the hospital where she is now in critical condition.

Panic grips bather over 'skin tissue' from faucet

By Agnes E. Donato

PANIC gripped a household in Mandaluyong City after a resident saw what looked like a skin tissue from their faucet.

Joel Lacsamana, spokesman of the Manila Water Co. Inc., relayed this story yesterday, saying a resident of the house in Barangka Drive was taking a bath when he saw the "skin tissue" fell from the faucet.

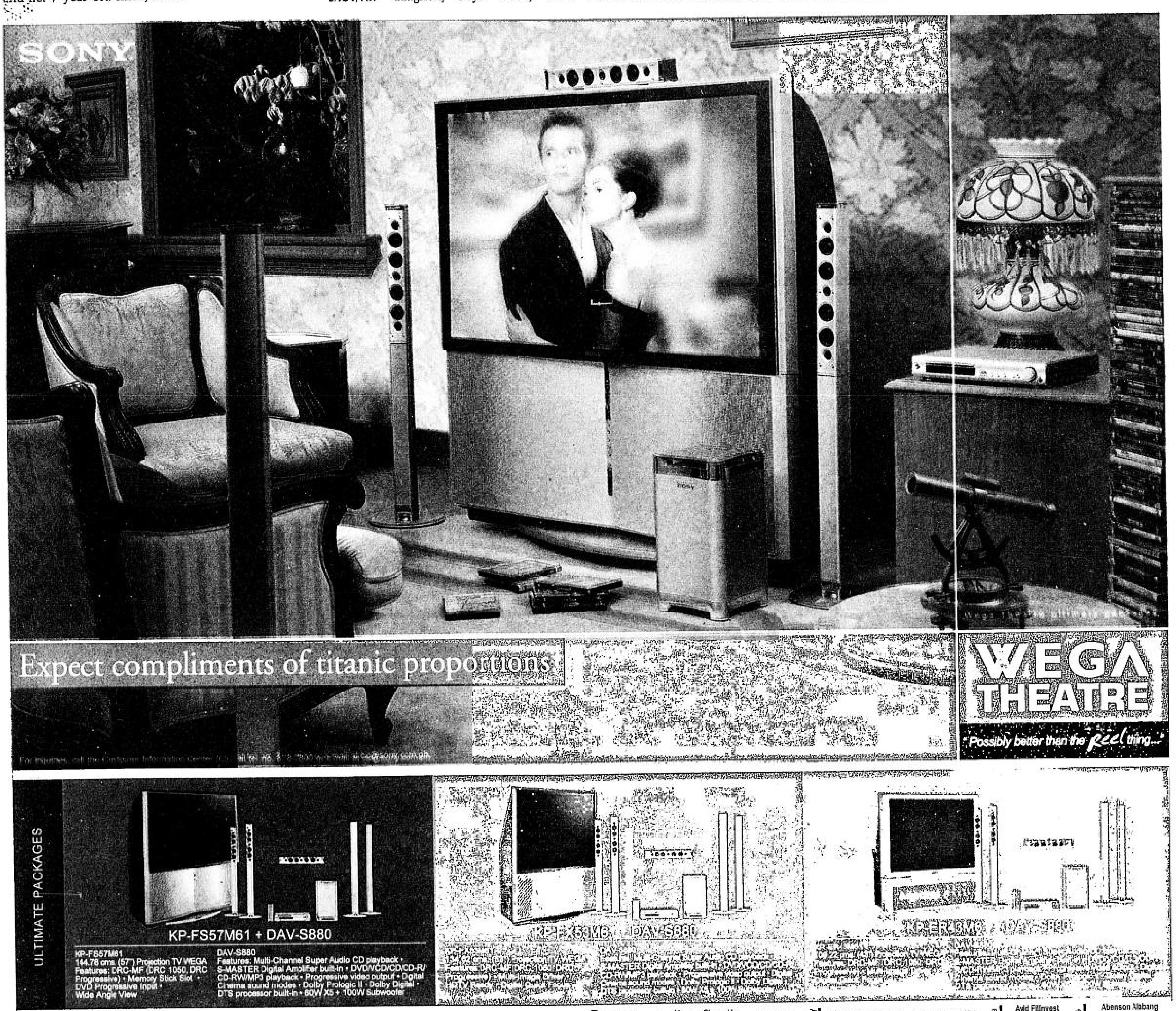
Thinking it could be a body part of Randy Diaz, the resident panicked.

Diaz, 19, fell into an MWCI ventilation chamber in Quezon City on May 18 and his body has yet to be retrieved from the pipeline where it got stuck.

But Lacsamana was quick to say that a body part of Diaz, if there's any, getting to the water pipelines of Mandaluyong was "a remote possibility."

He pointed out that the

PANIC/A17



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BARRED FROM ATHENS

SARS knocks off Pinoy boxers

By Roy Luarca

SEVILLE, Spain—The Filipinos had packed up and were all set to leave for Greece when the RP-Revicon boxing team received the shocking advisory: they've been barred from the 24th Acropolis Cup.

The Greek hosts gave several excuses, like the Philippines, a regular in the prestigious event, has not been invited; or it failed to meet the confirmation deadline.

But Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines president Manny Lopez later discovered SARS (Severe Acut Resopiratory Syndrome) to be the culprit.

Scheduled to fly to Athens on Monday for the 24th Acropolis Cup, the Filipinos were forced to cancel their trip after tournament organizers relayed information on Saturday that they won't be able to compete.

Upon learning of their fate on Saturday, Lopez tried to make an urgent appeal.

He called up the Acropolis organizers several times.

He cited an invitation dated January 3, 2003 sent by the Greek hosts which the Abap formally accepted through a faxed reply in March.

Lopez tried to explain that the Filipinos have been participating in the Acropolis Cup since 1992.

He also explained that the rejection came too late as they were already in Europe, with Athens as the last stop of their three-country itinerary.

The hosts refused to honor the appeal.

As a last resort, Lopez requested Bulgarian Jet Chev, head of the Amateur International Boxing Association's powerful júdges/referees commission, to intercede on the Filipinos' behalf.

But the organizers offered Chev yet another excuse–the tournament was already full with 16 countries entered.

Left with no option, Lopez asked Abap's travel agent in Manila to re-book the tickets of the 11-man contingent and to skip Athens.

After being given the run-around, Lopez finally found out on Sunday that SARS was really the culprit behind the rejection when he talked with Jung Jae-kyu, executive director of the Korean Amateur Boxing Association.

The Korean informed him that the South Korean team had the same experience. The Acropolis organizers accepted them as participants only to be denied permission later.

Since the Koreans were first-timers in the Acropolis Cup, however, they were bluntly told that the rejection was due to SARS.

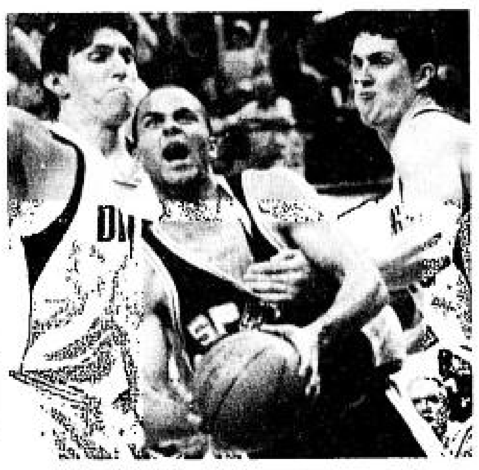
Only then did Lopez give up.

Members of the RP-Revicon team are scheduled to depart from Spain for Manila today.

Ironically, the Philippines has already been declared SARS-free by the World Health Organization itself.

This was the reason the Filipino participants in the World Summer Special Olympics in Dublin, Ireland, next month have been re-accepted by the hosts after being previously barred due to SARS.

WHAT'S INSIDE



Spurs rip Mavs, 1 win shy of Finals /A20
Yao demands apology, 12 cents from Coke /A20
Boys from Brazil complete sweep in Indy 500 /A22
Inskter wins Corning Classic /A22
Perry prevails by 6 strokes /A22

RP late in SEA Games preparations

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE PREPARATION for the hosting by the Philippines of the 2005 Southeast Asian Games is running behind schedule.

This was admitted yesterday by Philippine Olympic Committee secretary general Romy Ribano as he bared that the Philippine SEAG Organizing Committee has been missing scheduled meetings due to hectic schedules of its members.

As a result, Manila, one of the frontrunners in the SEAG hosting race, appealed to the Philsoc to fast-track its decision on the main venue because failure to do so "would result in disaster."

Ali Atienza, chair of the Manila Sports Council, said he has already made an appeal to the SEAG organizing committee to make up its mind as soon as possible so the eventual host could go ahead with the preparation, particularly raising funds that could reach P1 billion.

"If they declare the winning bidder six months from now, it would be very late and

RP/A21

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PARKER, DUNCAN, GINOBILI STAR

Spurs rip Mavs, 1 win shy of Finals

DALLAS, Texas--Tony Parker again fuelled a rally with 11 of his 25 points in the third quarter as the San Antonio Spurs took a huge step toward the National Basketball Association Finals with a 102-95 victory over the Dallas Mavericks on Sunday.

"My shot was on tonight so it was pretty good," said Parker.

The top-seeded Spurs opened a commanding 3-1 lead in the Western Conference finals and can return to the championship round for the first time since 1999 with a win at home on Tuesday (Wednesday in Manila).

"Defensively we turned up the intensity towards the end," said Spurs and league MVP Tim Duncan. "We have a young team haven't been together that many years but we are getting more experienced and you can see it on the court."

The third-seeded Mavericks lost Dirk Nowitzki, their leading scorer and rebounder, to a sprained left knee in the fourth quarter of Friday's home loss.

To counter his absence, Dallas coach Don Nelson used a handful of lineups that featured mostly small perimeter players and few power players.

"They do lots of things that really tax your squad," said Nelson. "Our little guys had to run a lot." The strategy worked for the first half as Dallas pushed the tempo and opened a 52-47 lead.

But as he did in game three, Parker showed that he can play some small ball, too.

The guard from France fuelled a 22-6 run that closed the third quarter, turning a nine-point deficit into a 77-70 lead.

Confidence

"Nothing special," said Parker, who scored 19 points in the third quarter of game three. "I just tried to be aggressive. I had a lot of confidence with my shot." "Tony is doing what Tony does," teammate Bruce Bowen said.

Instead of milking Duncan in the fourth quarter, the Spurs relied on a balanced attack. Duncan had 21 points, 20 rebounds, seven assists and four blocks in another stellar game, but he had some help.

Rookie Manu Ginobili scored 21 points off the bench, providing a spark in the middle two quarters. Stephen Jackson, who was benched early in the game, scored 17 points.

"That's our bench," Parker said. "Our bench is very good. I think that's what makes a championship team. Our bench is very good."

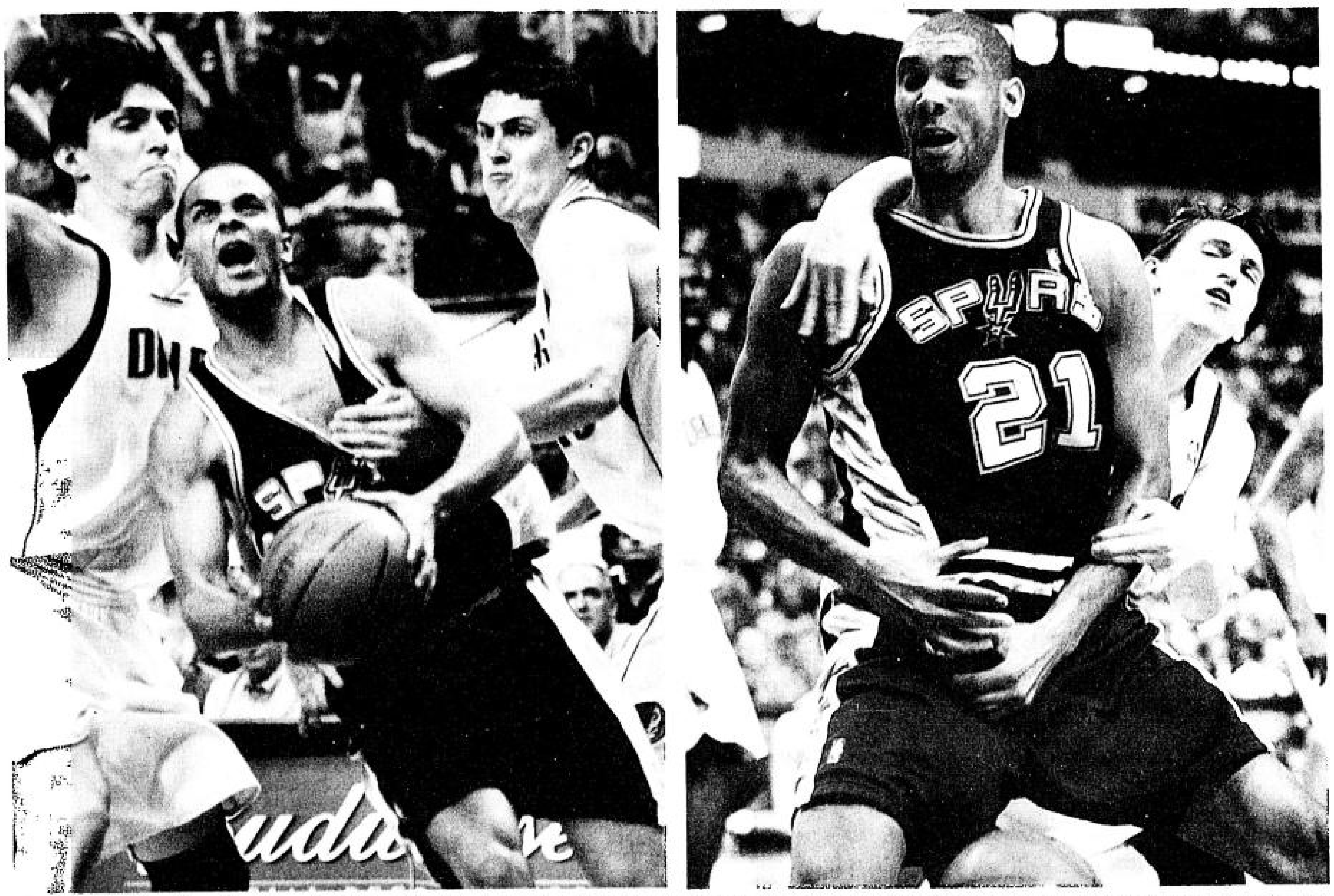
Steve Nash and Michael Finley scored 25 points and Nick Van Exel added 22 for the Mavericks, who relied heavily on their outside shooting. Dallas fired 31 3-pointers, making 12.

But with Nowitzki and fellow big men Shawn Bradley and Evan Eschmeyer sidelined by knee injuries, the Mavs were beaten on the boards, 49-40, and appeared to run out of gas at the end of the game.

"We had to do everything we could to just stay in the game," said Spurs coach Gregg Popovich. Nelson said he would monitor Nowitzki at practice on Monday.

"Dirk has a chance to play next game and I want to look at him next practice and talk to him see how he is feeling. See if he is ready to play in game five," said Nelson.

Nowitzki didn't sound too confident about his chances after game four. *AFP*



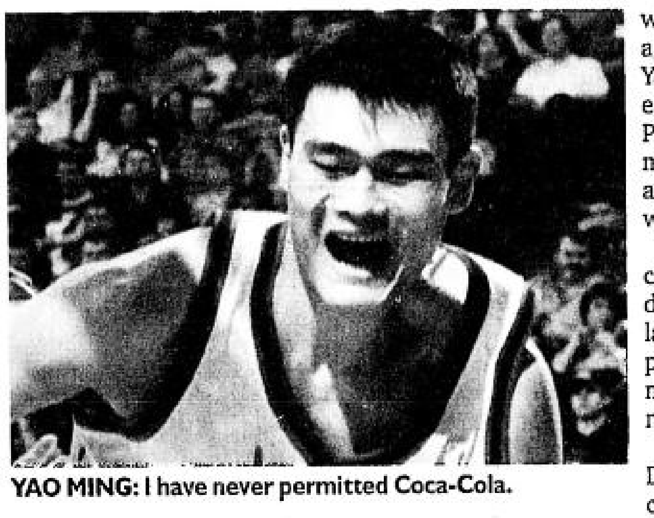
PARKER (left photo) is grabbed from behind by Dallas' Raef LaFrentz while Duncan gets a similar hard foul from Eduardo Najera (right) but the two San Antonio stars were unfazed as they led the Spurs to a 102-95 victory in Game 4 that gave them a 3-1 lead in the West Finals best-of-seven series. REUTERS

Yao demands apology, 12 cents from Coke

SHANGHAI--Houston Rockets center Yao Ming has filed a lawsuit against Coca-Cola for unlawfully using his image and is demanding a public apology and one yuan (12 cents) in compensation.

Yao's management agency said in a statement on his website Monday that "the core of the lawsuit is to protect Yao's legal rights, while the amount of compensation is less important".

"The unauthorized use of Yao's image has already harmed his reputation," it added.



YAO MING: I have never permitted Coca-Cola.

The indictment was filed in a Shanghai court on Friday.

On May 15, Yao released a statement claiming that the Coca-Cola Company was using his image without permission and demanded it be removed from their products.

The spat stems from just released commemorative Coke bottles in China which feature a photo of Yao and fellow Chinese national team stars Mengke Bateer and Guo Shiqiang wearing their national team shirts.

"I have never permitted Coca-Cola to use my image to promote their products," Yao said in the statement carried by Xinhua news agency.

"I require Coca-Cola to withdraw immediately all the products bearing my image and all promotion materials which use my names or images." The news comes after Yao signed a multi-year deal earlier this month to become PepsiCo's image frontman, making him the first Chinese athlete to secure a major worldwide marketing deal.

"We will respect the court's judgement procedures and final result. The lawsuit won't have any impact on Yao's training and matches," said Team Yao, his management agency.

Coke told the Shanghai Daily Monday it had yet to receive any notice of the suit, but pointed out that the image they used was of the national team, not just Yao.

As a co-sponsor of the Chinese team, Coke is authorised to use images of the squad as long as they contain pictures of at least three team members.

Yao, the first pick in last year's National Basketball Association (NBA) draft, is now in Shanghai after his rookie season in the US league. *AFP*

AT A GLANCE

NBA PLAYOFFS 2003

CONFERENCE FINALS

Eastern Conference

(1) Detroit vs. (2) New Jersey

Pistons 0, Nets 4

Game 1: New Jersey 76, Detroit 74

Game 2: New Jersey 88, Detroit 86

Game 3: New Jersey 97, Detroit 85

Game 4: New Jersey 102, Detroit 82

New Jersey wins Eastern Conference title, 4-0

Western Conference

(1) San Antonio vs (3) Dallas

Spurs 3, Mavericks 1

Game 1: Dallas 113, San Antonio 110

Game 2: San Antonio 119, Dallas 106

Game 3: San Antonio 96, Dallas 83

Game 4: San Antonio 102, Dallas 95

Game 5 at San Antonio (May 28, 9:30 a.m.)

*Game 6 at Dallas (May 30, 9:30 a.m.)

*Game 7 at San Antonio (June 1, 8:30 a.m.)

* If necessary

TBD (To Be Determined)

Nets, on 10-day break, are underdogs again

EAST RUTHERFORD, New Jersey--Kenyon Martin gave one emphatic prediction about the NBA Finals.

"Ain't no sweeping going on this year," the New Jersey forward said.

Actually, the way the Nets are playing, Martin could be selling his own team short. They've won 10 straight playoff games and swept two series in a row, having finished off the Detroit Pistons in the Eastern Conference finals Saturday night.

But Martin was thinking more about losing four straight, as New Jersey did in last year's finals against the Los Angeles Lakers. The Nets will again be the underdog, although they return as a more talented, more mature and less star-struck team.

"We feel like we're going to go in there and win it," guard Lucious Harris said. "Last year we didn't know what to expect. We were happy to be there. You got give credit to the Lakers. They didn't win three championships for nothing. It's a good feeling to get back."

But first, there's a long wait. New Jersey has a 10-day break -- an eternity for a basketball team -- before opening at Dallas or San Antonio on June 4. As coach Byron Scott is discovering, the drawback to being so dominant in the playoffs is that it leaves way too much time to kill.

"Five or six days is enough," Scott said. "Ten days is probably too much time. You never experience any thing like this during the regular season. It's going to mess up your timing."

And how will he manage the time?

"A little bit of everything," Scott said. "We're going to have a couple of days off, we're going to go hard, then we're going to go not-so-hard, then we're going to have another day off, then we're going to go hard." *AP*

SPORTS TV

Compiled by Lorenzo Manguiat

BASKETBALL: Pistons vs Nets, Game 4 (May 25); 8 a.m. (r-9:30 p.m.); Solar Sports - Relive New Jersey's sweep of Detroit in the Eastern Finals.

GOLF: LPGA Michelob Light Open, Final Round; 11 a.m. (r); ESPN - Catch Jenny Rosales slug it out with the big names of ladies golf.

Best of the PGA; 11 p.m.; ESPN - Take a look back at the fantastic finishes in the PGA.

One for humankind

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

A VICTORY not only for golf as a whole but for humankind as well.

That was the bigger victory Annika Sorenstam achieved than getting an invite to the Colonial, one of the PGA Tour's biggest annual tournaments won five times by the inscrutable Ben Hogan.

Golf, because of the US Masters at Augusta National in Georgia, has always been known as a virtual man's world. Augusta National has not allowed females to become members nearly 60 years after the legendary Bobby Jones built the course. The world's bastion of anti-feminism lets women enter its premises only during the Masters Week around April every year. But even that is no guarantee they could gawk at anything at Augusta National, not even the clubhouse door leading to the men's room.

Restrictions abound.

They can sniff the cool breeze brought on by the towering pine trees and smell the azaleas and many more flowers scattered on the world's most beautiful golf course to all their hearts' content. But never, ever are they allowed to even attempt to barge into the clubhouse or they'll be rudely treated by burly men in black suits, all under strict orders to bodily hurl away intruders or initiate instant arrest.

Count the blades of grass on Augusta National's well-manicured fairways, but never the doors leading to either the clubhouse or The Jacket Room where the members' green jackets pressed spic-and-span hang all-year round.

Over at Augusta National, every member wears his green jacket whenever he is around. A member has to call the front office in advance so that the jacket is readied before he arrives.

If I am not mistaken, the all-male membership roster still does not include an African-American.

There is only one honorary member at Augusta National - the President of the United States of America. But he cannot play at Augusta National unless accompanied by a member.

And so, imagine Augusta National suddenly breaking its vows and giving a lady golfer an invite to the Masters?

That should be headline stuff for even The New York Times.

That'd be like saying George W. Bush has invited Saddam Hussein for dinner at the White House.

On local shores, that'd be like seeing Chavit Singson visit Erap Estrada at Veterans.

The news would certainly include a side bar on where the female bathroom is located. For, at Augusta National, a female bathroom is as Greek as a guest book for women.

But enough of Augusta National.

Annika Sorenstam playing in the men's Tour was a pitch for gender equality. The invite was the key, but Annika's yes was the clincher. For, had Annika balked and succumbed to pressure from pigs on the PGA Tour disguised as men, it would have put to waste Rosa Parks' man-sized struggle in that famed "Saga of Seats" that saw her refuse to surrender her bus seat to a white woman during the segregation era in America's Deep Down South.

Annika's failure to make the cut was of no consequence, either.

What was of consequence was she stood mightily atop the world stage to become the spokesperson for humankind, not just for women.

I am part of humankind and I applauded, continue to applaud, Annika's gallantry. It is not everyday that we see persons of Annika's kind come up with such heroism under the most trying time.

I belong to Annika's Army now because Annika let herself be counted when she could have elected to retreat to the comfort of being the world's No. 1 lady golfer today. Had she refused the invite, it would not have caused a furor. Annika has become bigger than women's golf that the game's adoring followers now look up to her as kindly as a mother would to even her most stubborn child.

Annika's scores weren't that bad: 71-74 which is 5-over on a course that was strictly built for men - 7,080 yards that played longer because of rains.

Before Annika got cut, though, she got the world's most resounding applause - a wish from President Bush: "I hope she makes the cut. I'm pulling for her. I hope I'll be watching her on Saturday and Sunday."

She missed the cut by four shots - not bad for a "rookie" getting her baptism of fire. Had she not stumbled and took five bogeys in a span of eight holes, she would have played in the weekend.

Annika failed but not after beating 11 others. She tied for 96th.

Annika, emotionally drained from the massive scrutiny of being the first woman in 58 years to play on the PGA Tour, left the 18th green in tears after ramming home a 14-footer for par. But before she cried, she tossed the ball to the cheering crowd in the stands.

She had one more to crow about: Her 145 was eight strokes better than the odds out of Las Vegas.

Sorenstam, who has won 43 times, with four major championships, on the LPGA tour, said she wasn't trying to prove anything to anyone, least of all "that I could beat the boys."

What she proved was women may not be longer than men off the tee, but they, sure, are never short of politically correct reasons in advancing the cause of humankind.

Long live, Annikamania!

***

FASTBREAK. I tip my hat off to Vice Admiral (ret.) Louie F. Fernandez for ably orchestrating once more the staging of the AIM Masters Golf Classic at Alabang. Like the event's inaugurals in December 2001, last Monday's bash was another huge success.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Montaña seeks 3rd win vs Viva

GAMES TODAY
(Pasig Sports Center)
2 p.m.—Viva vs Montaña
4 p.m.—John O vs Hapee

MONTAÑA Jewel, hoping to get another endgame explosion from Gary David, shoots for its third straight semifinal victory against Viva Mineral Water today in the Sunkist-PBL Unity Cup at the Pasig Sports Center.

The Jewelers collide with the Waterforce at 2 p.m.

Hapee Toothpaste, running second with a 1-1 card, faces winless John O at 4 o'clock.

The 6-foot-3 David, from Dinalupihan, Bataan, is credited with securing the Jewelers' last four wins.

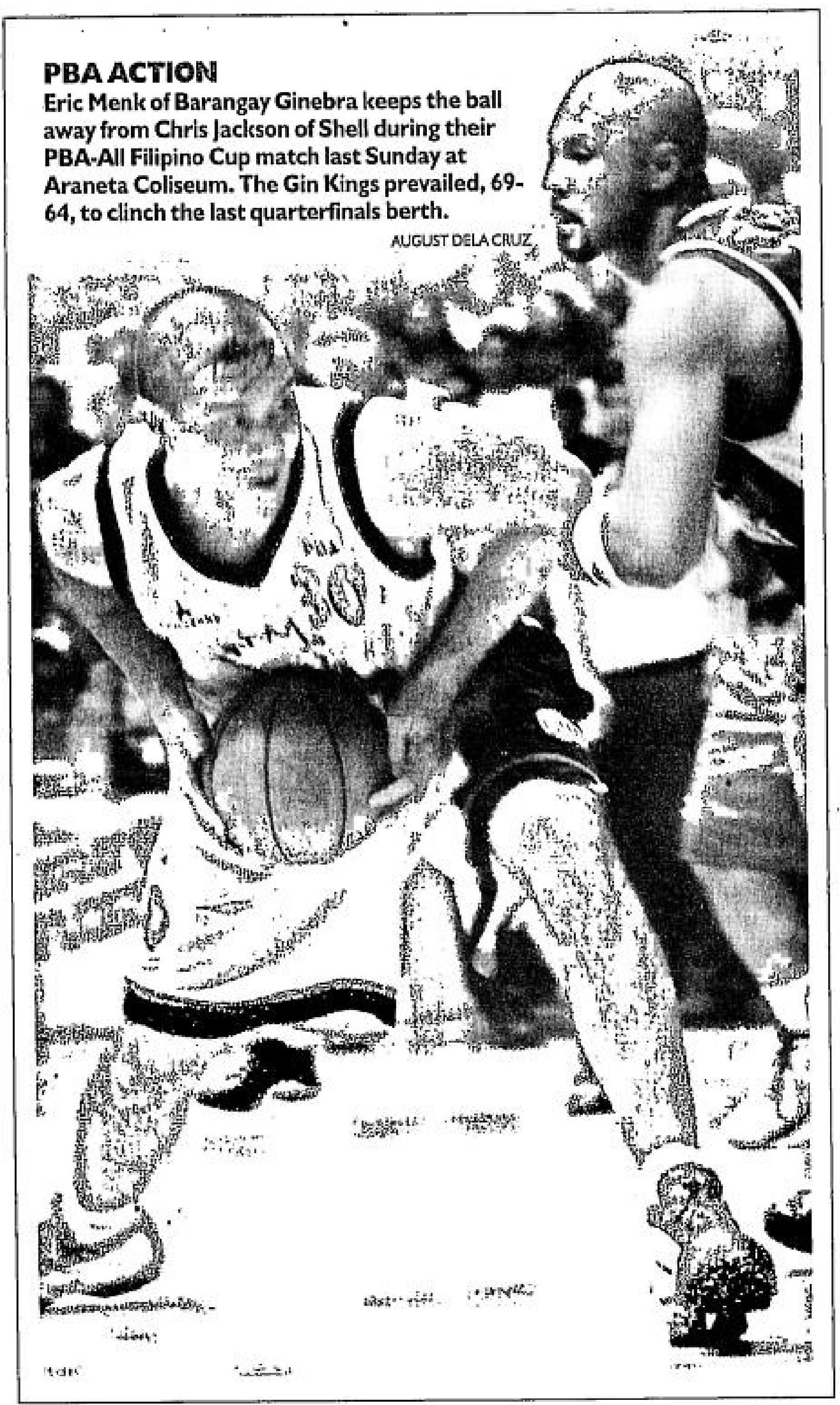
In Montaña's last victory over Viva, David scattered 15 of his 23 points in the final quarter including the game-clinching triple in the last 28.1 seconds of a 62-61 squeaker.

Against Hapee on May 2, David drilled in eight of his 18 points in a 16-0 blast that lifted Montaña to a 77-70 win.

David reprised his demolition job against Hapee in their first meeting in the semifinals on May 22, scoring 16 of his 24 points in the final quarter as Montaña escaped with a 63-61 victory.

In the PBL Midgets Under-13, Selecta Moo and Hapee toothpaste eye their second straight win against separate rivals.

Selecta Moo meets Sunkist at 9:30 a.m. while Hapee tackles Sunkist at 11 a.m.



PBA ACTION
Eric Menk of Barangay Ginebra keeps the ball away from Chris Jackson of Shell during their PBA-All Filipino Cup match last Sunday at Araneta Coliseum. The Gin Kings prevailed, 69-64, to clinch the last quarterfinals berth.
AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Hometown bets shine in amateur slugfest

By Dennis U. Eroa

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Bantamweight Benjo Estefano and flyweight Christopher Fernandez struck big blows for host Palawan at the start of the 2003 National Open men and women amateur boxing championships Sunday night at the Puerto Princesa Coliseum here.

With the hometown crowd roaring in approval, the 18-year-old Estefano beat Roberto Caballes of Mandaluyong City, 98-64, while the 16-year-old Fernandez won by RSC-outclassed over Arena-Quezon City's Ruben Trasa.

Estefano and Fernandez are members of the seven-man, two-woman strong Palawan team supported by Gov. Joel T. Reyes, who watched the bouts and gave his wards cash incentives for their victories.

Another hometown bet, flyweight Jimmy Ambray of Puerto Princesa City, downed Ronnie Astano of Arena-Quezon City, 40-36.

Others who won their preliminary bouts were bantamweight Kim Monsate of Arena-QC, Anthony Marcial of Zamboanga City, Jerope Mercado of Philippine Navy, Welbert Eballes of Philippine Air Force, La Union's Bon Refuerzo, Baguio City's Jefferson Linay and Roland Abatay ofZamboanga del Norte, Rico Laput of Philippine Air Force and Mark Somodio of Baguio City.

RP late . . .

From A19

the burden of making all these preparation would be on the eventual host city," said Atienza. "We hope they decide now."

Unfortunately, the 12-man SEAG organizing committee has yet to decide on whether to build a new sports facility or refurbish an old one. From such decision, the committee will then choose from among the six aspiring bidders.

The members of Philsoc are Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo, Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho, Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon, Rep. Monico Puentevella and Philippine Sports Commission chair Eric Buhain, representing the government.

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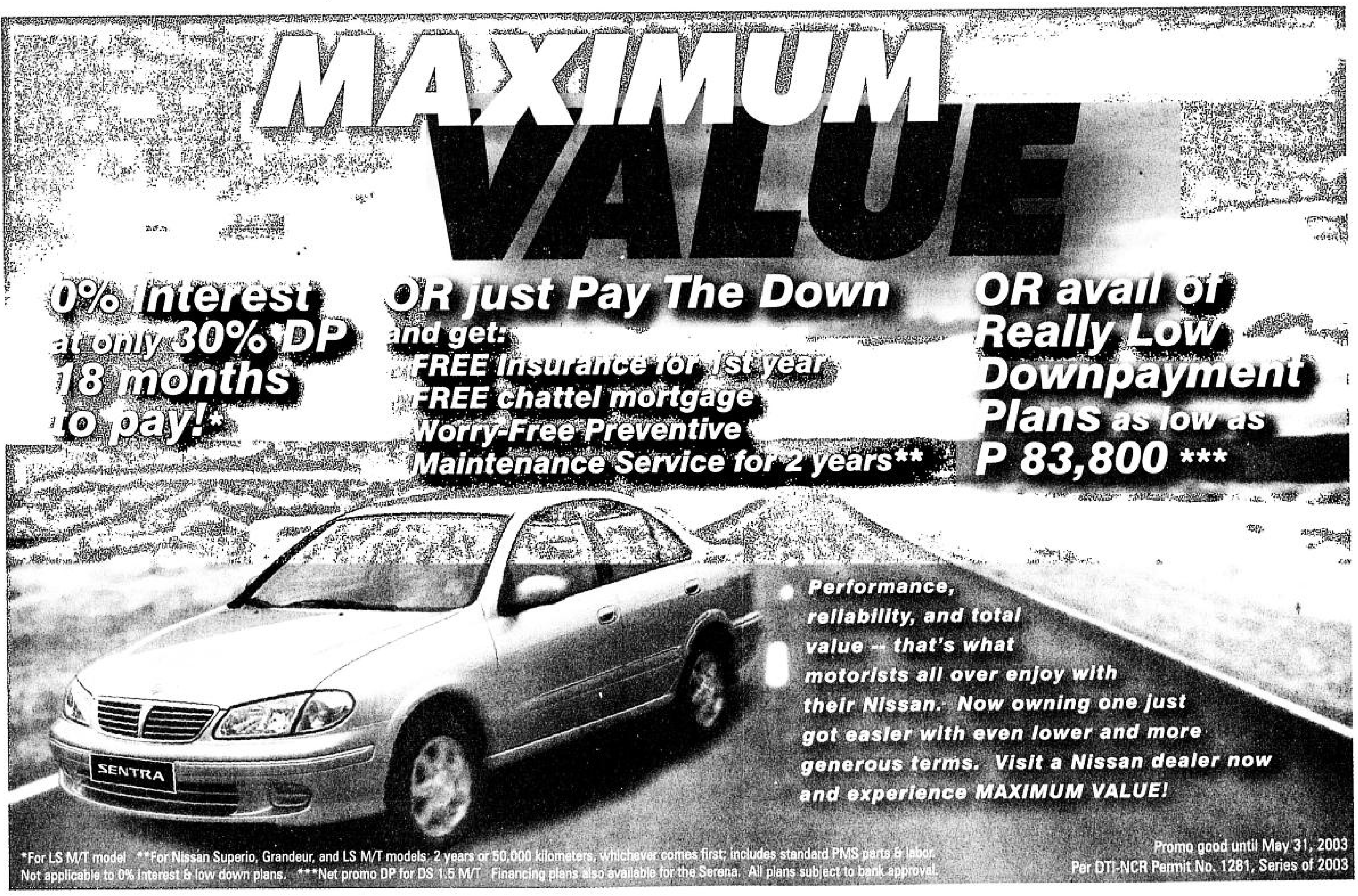

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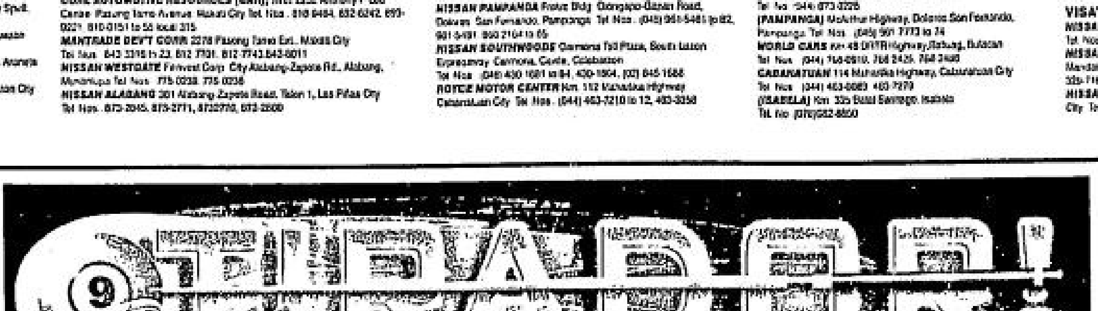

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Snooky Villanueva	1	0
Dennis Orcullo	0	1
Dodong Andam	0	1
Lee Vann Corteza	X	X
Bebeng Gallego	X	X
Marlon Manalo	X	X
Warren Kiamco	X	X

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Boys from Brazil dominate Indy 500

De Ferran, Castroneves, Kanaan complete 1-2-3 sweep

INDIANAPOLIS—The Indianapolis 500 is becoming a regular Brazilian carnival.

Gil de Ferran's win Sunday was the third straight for one of the "Boys from Brazil," and Helio Castroneves and Tony Kanaan made it a 1-2-3 sweep for the country–a first in Indy history.

"It's awesome. There's going to be a party over there," third-place finisher Tony Kanaan said. "Probably, they're going to throw a carnival for us."

De Ferran will be the first to join the celebration after beating teammate and countryman Helio Castroneves, the winner the past two years.

This American holiday weekend is becoming a decidedly international event, with a particularly Brazilian flavor.

Besides Kanaan, Castroneves and de Ferran, Vitor Meira finished 12th. Airton Dare crashed after finishing 125 laps and Felipe Giaffone managed only six laps before engine trouble knocked him out.

"Unfortunately Brazilian people, I don't think, they know how big this is," Castroneves said after being denied an unprecedented third straight Indy win by his Penske teammate.

They should learn quickly.

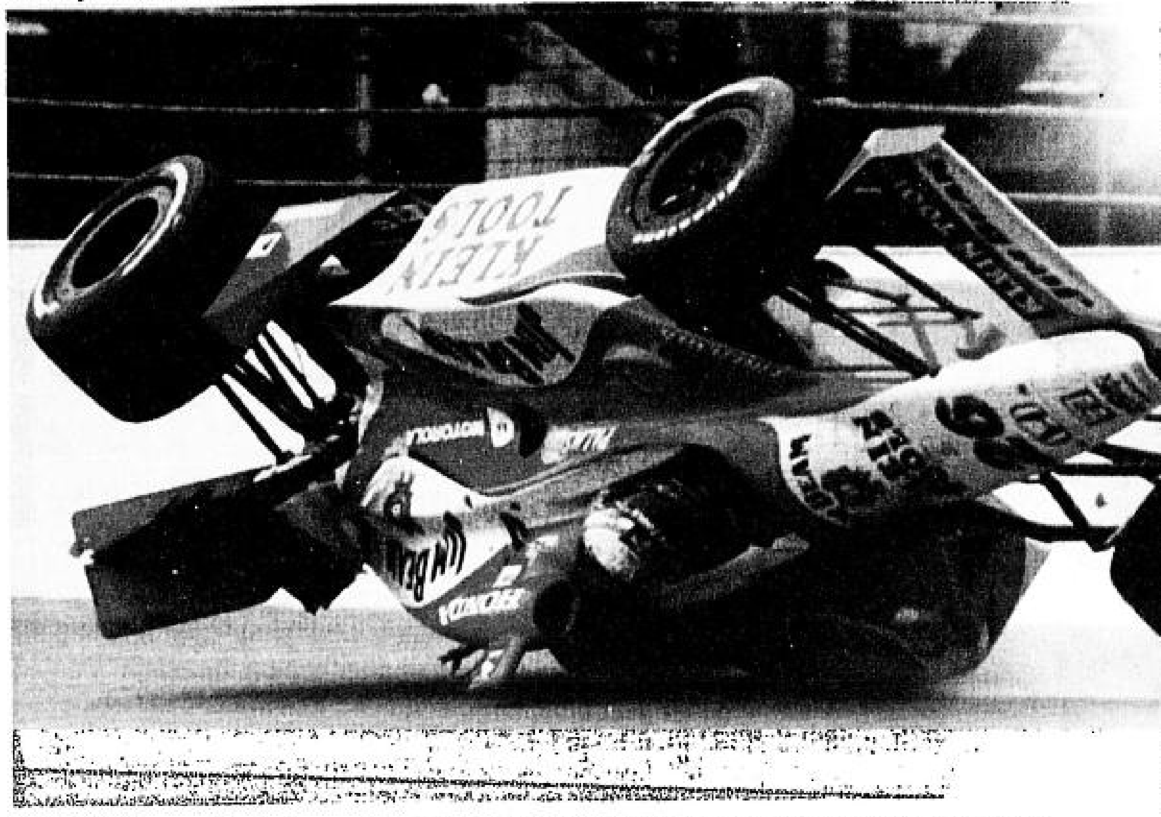
Brazilians have dominated Indianapolis in recent years with seven drivers finishing in the top three since 2001–a major achievement considering the Indy Racing League was created to help develop young American drivers.

Castroneves attributes the Brazilian success to being one of the few sports that people follow in his country. He also has said that drivers start competing at earlier ages.

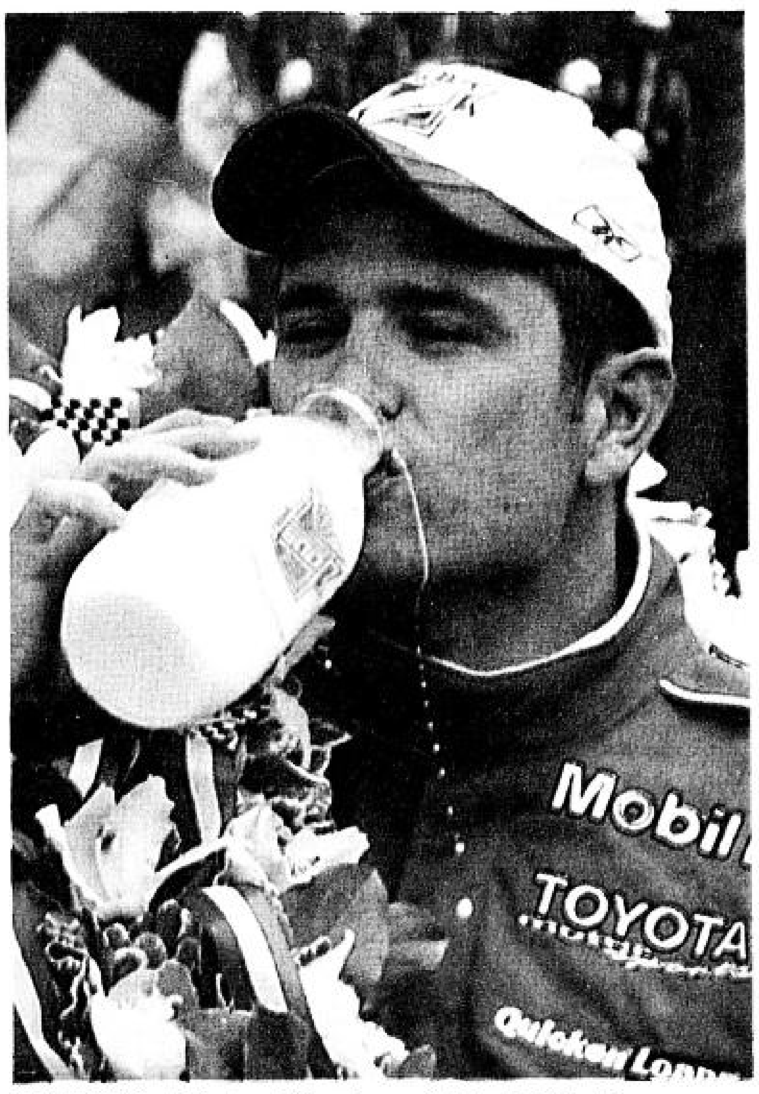
This year's Indy race is one example.

Many of the Brazilians competed as teenagers and became friends long before they made it onto the 2½-mile oval.

"Tony started when he was 9 or something and Helio when he was 11 or something," de Ferran said. "Tony, Helio and I, we race hard, but we also like to race hard." *AP*



DAN Wheldon crashes between turns three and four during the 87th Indianapolis 500 on Sunday. Wheldon walked away from the crash. REUTERS



DE FERRAN celebrates in the winner circle by drinking the traditional jug of milk. AFP

SPORTSWATCH

Costa a longshot again in Open

COSTA

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For a while, it appeared that Inkster, who started the day three strokes behind Scotland's Catriona Matthew, would have a chance to make a run at the record 59 shot by Sorenstam two years ago at the Standard Register PING.

"Coming from three back is not easy, Catriona Matthew is a good player and Lorie Kane is up there and Meg Mallon and Beth Daniel, just some very good, strong players," said Inkster.

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Matthew bogeyed the final hole to complete a 70 and finish alone in third at 269, one shot ahead of Meg Mallon and Beth Daniel.

It marked the second time this year that Matthew gave away the lead in the final round. She also squandered the lead in last month's Takefuji Classic. *AFP*

INKSTER raises her hand in triumph as she birdies the 18th hole from 20 feet away. REUTERS

Amistad-Villareal leads E. Ridge winners

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"That's always really been important for me to get five," Perry told reporters.

"I can't say enough for how I felt this week. I was very calm, very relaxed...it was easy." Justin Leonard flirted with a 59 before a bogey at the 18th and tied the course record of 61 jointly held by Perry, Greg Kraft (1999), Keith Clearwater (1993) and Lee Janzen (1993). The 1997 British Open champion was second on 267.

Jeff Sluman (65) was on 268, 12-under, followed by Brandt Jobe (64) on 269. *Reuters*

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Boys from Brazil dominate Indy 500

De Ferran, Castroneves, Kanaan complete 1-2-3 sweep

INDIANAPOLIS—The Indianapolis 500 is becoming a regular Brazilian carnival.

Gil de Ferran's win Sunday was the third straight for one of the "Boys from Brazil," and Helio Castroneves and Tony Kanaan made it a 1-2-3 sweep for the country–a first in Indy history.

"It's awesome. There's going to be a party over there," third-place finisher Tony Kanaan said. "Probably, they're going to throw a carnival for us."

De Ferran will be the first to join the celebration after beating teammate and countryman Helio Castroneves, the winner the past two years.

This American holiday weekend is becoming a decidedly international event, with a particularly Brazilian flavor.

Besides Kanaan, Castroneves and de Ferran, Vitor Meira finished 12th. Airton Dare crashed after finishing 125 laps and Felipe Giaffone managed only six laps before engine trouble knocked him out.

"Unfortunately Brazilian people, I don't think, they know how big this is," Castroneves said after being denied an unprecedented third straight Indy win by his Penske teammate.

They should learn quickly.

Brazilians have dominated Indianapolis in recent years with seven drivers finishing in the top three since 2001–a major achievement considering the Indy Racing League was created to help develop young American drivers.

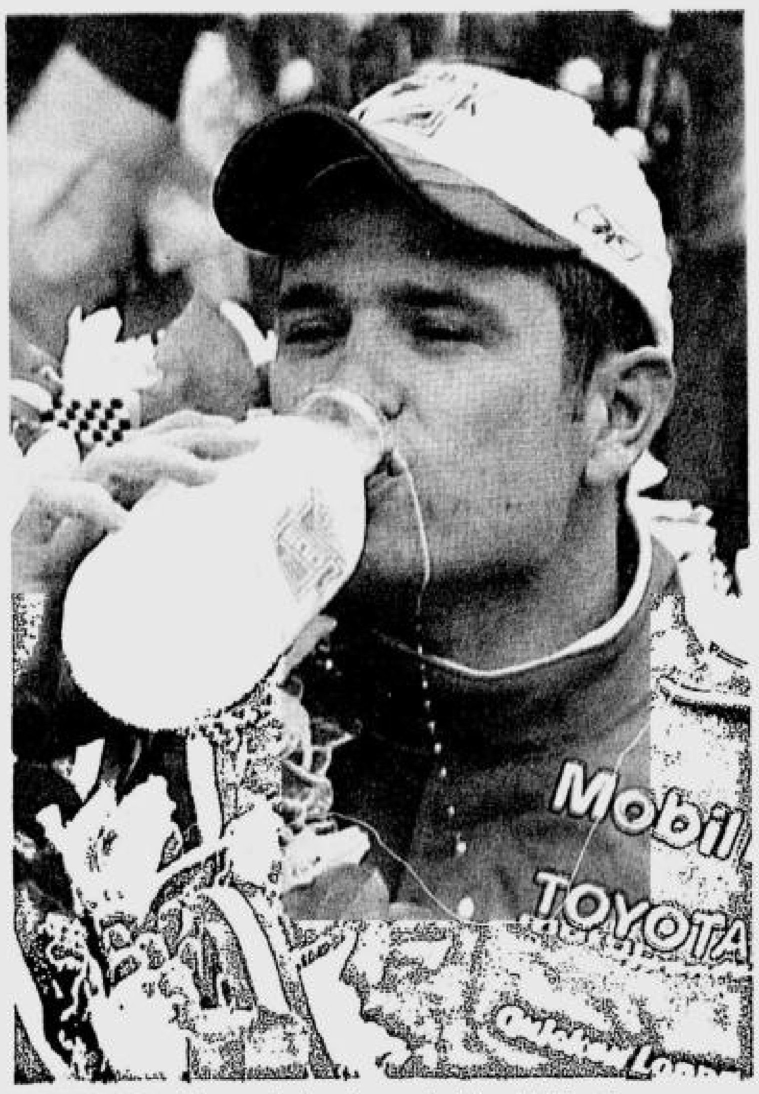
Castroneves attributes the Brazilian success to being one of the few sports that people follow in his country. He also has said that drivers start competing at earlier ages.

This year's Indy race is one example.

Many of the Brazilians competed as teenagers and became friends long before they made it onto the 2½-mile oval.

"Tony started when he was 9 or something and Helio when he was 11 or something," de Ferran said. "Tony, Helio and I, we race hard, but we also like to race hard." *AP*

DAN Wheldon crashes between turns three and four during the 87th Indianapolis 500 on Sunday. Wheldon walked away from the crash. REUTERS



DE FERRAN celebrates in the winner circle by drinking the traditional jug of milk. AFP

SPORTSWATCH

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G1 GLORIETTA 1	G4 GLORIETTA 4	GB1 GREENBELT 1	GB3 GREENBELT 3	ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER
1 WALANG KAPALIT	THE MATRIX RELOADED	ArtFilm 1 AUTO FOCUS (Exclusive) 12:30, 2:45, 5:00, 7:15, 9:30	THX GUARANTEED SEATS 1 HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS 11:50 2:15 4:40 7:05 9:30	THX HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS
2 THE MATRIX RELOADED	2 X-MEN 2	2 THE MATRIX RELOADED 12:30, 3:20, 6:10, 9:00	THX GUARANTEED SEATS 2 THE MATRIX RELOADED 11:45 2:40 5:35 11:25	2 THE MATRIX RELOADED
3 HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS	THX GUARANTEED SEATS 3 THE MATRIX RELOADED 1:00 3:50 6:40 9:30	On Stage	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 THE HOURS 12:50 3:15 5:40, 8:05 10:30	3 THE MATRIX RELOADED
4 X-MEN 2	4 SO CLOSE	VIVA ACOUSTIC NIGHT FEAT. SIDE A May 30 & 31	GUARANTEED SEATS 4 THE MATRIX RELOADED 12:20 3:15 6:10 9:05	4 RING 0
	5 BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE		GUARANTEED SEATS 5 HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS 1:40 4:05 6:30 8:55 11:25	5 SO CLOSE
	6 HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS			
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tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	SO CLOSE
2	THE MATRIX RELOADED
3	DAYO
4	HIRAM

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto SUPER CINERAMA

tel 733.4238

1 (DOLBY)	THE MATRIX RELOADED
2	DAYO
3	ANGEL SA LUPA
4	WALANG KAPALIT
5	HIRAM

FRC Cinema

(Talaba Bacoor Cavite)

1	
2	

Berma Cinema

(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1	THE MATRIX RELOADED
2	HIRAM

THE CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT Araneta

Ali MALL CINEPLEX 7

tel 911.3101 loc. 821/8242/8400

1	ANGEL SA LUPA
2	DAYO
3 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	SO CLOSE
4 (SDDS)	THE MATRIX RELOADED
5 (DTS)	THE MATRIX RELOADED
6	WALANG KAPALIT
7	HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS

FarmersPlaza CINEMAS

tel 911.3101 loc. 821/8242/8400

1	MATRIX
2	HIRAM

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall

(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
TEL. (049) 837-0926

1	HIRAM
2	WALANG KAPALIT
3 (DTS)	THE MATRIX RELOADED

Cinema 2000 Waltermart

(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	THE HOURS
2 (DTS)	WALANG KAPALIT
3 (DOLBY)	THE MATRIX RELOADED
4	HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall

(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1	THE HOURS
2 (DC)	HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS
3 (DTS)	THE MATRIX RELOADED
4	ANGEL SA LUPA

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix

(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	WALANG KAPALIT
2	TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 (DOLBY)	X- MEN -2
4	

Cinema 2000 MetroTown

(Tarlac) tel(045) 982.1729

1	WALANG KAPALIT
2	NATIONAL SECURITY
3 (DOLBY)	A MAN APART
4 (DTS)	THE MATRIX RELOADED

Magic Star Cinema

(Tarlac City) tel (045) 611.4305

1 (DOLBY)	THE MATRIX RELOADED
2 (DTS)	A MAN APART
3	WALANG KAPALIT

Lianas Cinema

(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	RESERVE
2	HIRAM
3 (DTS)	EBA LASON KAY ADAN
4	THE MATRIX RELOADED

Lianas MovieCity

(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS
2	WALANG KAPALIT
3 (DTS)	THE MATRIX RELOADED
4	HIRAM
5	X-MEN 2

Olivarez Tri-Cinema

(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	THE MATRIX RELOADED
2	WALANG KAPALIT
3	HIRAM

Olivarez Los Baños

tel (049) 249.2558

1	THE MATRIX RELOADED
2	HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS
3	HIRAM

Mega Center Mall

(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283

1	NATIONAL SECURITY
2	KANGAROO JACK
3 (DTS)	WALANG KAPALIT
4 (DOLBY)	THE MATRIX RELOADED

Cabuyao

(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808

1 (DTS)	
2 (DTS)	

Emperor

(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	KIKAY
2	WALANG KAPALIT
3	RESERVE

Fiesta World Mall

(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	WALANG KAPALIT
2	PHONE BOOTH
3	ANGER MANAGEMENT
4	THE MATRIX RELOADED

Jade Cinema

(Angeles City) tel (045)887-5001 TO 03

1 (DOLBY)	HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS
2	WALANG KAPALIT
3 (DTS ES)	THE MATRIX RELOADED
4	BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE

Cine Nepo Mall

(Angeles City) te (045) 887-0121

1	WALANG KAPALIT
2	HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS
3 (DOLBY)	BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
4 (DTS)	THE MATRIX RELOADED

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

ADVANCED SCREENING THX DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

FESTIVAL CINEMA
Level 4
Festival Supermall
Filinvest - Alabang

Tel. 85035-71 to 72

JIM CARREY

Bruce ALMIGHTY
OPENS TOMORROW

SM CINEMA

SM Dial-A-Movie Tel. 833-9999

NOW SHOWING

SM CITY BACOOR

4173868

1	DAYO
2	ANGHEL SA LUPA
3	THE MATRIX RELOADED
4	HOW TO LOSE A GUY ...
5	THE MATRIX RELOADED
6	WALANG KAPALIT
7	HIRAM
8	X-MEN 2

SM CENTERPOINT

7149522 -7161416

1	WALANG KAPALIT
2	SO CLOSE
3	THE MATRIX RELOADED
4	DAYO
5	THE MATRIX RELOADED
6	HIRAM
7	X-MEN 2
8	ANGHEL SA LUPA
9	HOW TO LOSE A GUY...
10	RING 0

SM CITY FAIRVIEW

9350749

1	ANGHEL SA LUPA
2	SO CLOSE
3	JOHNNY ENGLISH
4	THE MATRIX RELOADED
5	X-MEN 2
6	WALANG KAPALIT
7	THE MATRIX RELOADED
8	HOW TO LOSE A GUY...
9	TILL THERE WAS YOU
10	HIRAM
11	RING 0
12	DAYO

SM CITY MANILA

5239240

1	THE MATRIX RELOADED
2	HOW TO LOSE A GUY...
3	SO CLOSE
4	X-MEN 2
5	THE MATRIX RELOADED
6	THE MATRIX RELOADED
7	HIRAM
8	DAYO
9	WALANG KAPALIT
10	TILL THERE WAS YOU
11	RING 0
12	ANGHEL SA LUPA

SM MEGAMALL

6331901 • 6329401

1	THE MATRIX RELOADED
2	X-MEN 2
3	THE MATRIX RELOADED
4	HOW TO LOSE A GUY...
5	RING 0
6	DAYO
7	WALANG KAPALIT
8	TILL THERE WAS YOU
9	ANGHEL SA LUPA
10	THE MATRIX RELOADED
11	SO CLOSE
12	HIRAM

SM CITY NORTH EDSA

9295452

1	X-MEN 2
2	THE MATRIX RELOADED
3	RING 0
4	WALANG KAPALIT
5	DAYO
6	SO CLOSE
7	HOW TO LOSE A GUY...
8	THE MATRIX RELOADED

SM SOUTHMALL

8066888

1	RING 0
2	SO CLOSE
3	THE MATRIX RELOADED
4	HOW TO LOSE A GUY ...
5	DAYO
6	ANGHEL SA LUPA
7	WALANG KAPALIT
8	THE MATRIX RELOADED
9	X-MEN 2
10	HIRAM

SM CITY CEBU

2313876

1	THE MATRIX RELOADED
2	HOW TO LOSE A GUY ...
3	BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
4	PINOCCHIO
5	SOULKEEPER
6	PUNLA
7	WALANG KAPALIT
8	THE MATRIX RELOADED

SM CITY ILOILO

3209422

1	WISHMASTER 4
2	CLOSED
3	THE MATRIX RELOADED
4	WALANG KAPALIT
5	BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
6	X-MEN 2
7	CLOSED
8	AMAZON

SM CITY PAMPANGA

7128015

1	THE MATRIX RELOADED
2	CONFESSION OF A...
3	HOW TO LOSE A GUY...
4	DAYO
5	BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
6	WALANG KAPALIT

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT

8294975

1	DAYO
2	HOW TO LOSE A GUY ...
3	THE MATRIX RELOADED
4	WALANG KAPALIT

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN

2514302

1	THE MATRIX RELOADED
2	WALANG KAPALIT
3	HIRAM
4	DAYO

SM CITY DAVAO

2976998

1	THE MATRIX RELOADED
2	AMAZON
3	PINOCCHIO
4	WALANG KAPALIT
5	BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
6	THE MATRIX RELOADED

SM BICUTAN

776-3055

1	THE MATRIX RELOADED
2	DAYO
3	WALANG KAPALIT
4	HOW TO LOSE A GUY...

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO

859-2884

1	THE MATRIX RELOADED
2	JAILBIRDS
3	WALANG KAPALIT
4	BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE

THE PODIUM CINEMA

18 ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City
633-8976

1	HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS 11:00 FS/11:20 MF/1:40/4:00/6:20/8:40/ 10:35 LFS/11:00 LMF/12:55 END
2	THE MATRIX RELOADED 11:10 FS/11:40 MF/2:30/5:20/8:10/ 10:35 LFS/11:00 LMF/1:25 END

LATE NIGHT SCREENING DURING FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS
Matinee : P100.00 • Screening until 5pm • Monday thru Friday
Regular Rate : P120.00 • After 5pm • Saturday • Sunday • Holidays (Reserved Seating)

Movies are subject to change without prior notice

MOVIEWORLD CINEMAS

@ Robinsons Malls

call-a-movie: 536- 7812

NOW SHOWING

Galleria

632- 9115- 16
633- 7641 loc. 279

THX	MATRIX RELOADED 12:30, 3:20, 6:10, 9:00 LMF
2	MATRIX RELOADED
3	MATRIX RELOADED
4	SO CLOSE
5	HOW TO LOOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS
6	RING - 0
7	WALANG KAPALIT
8	ANGEL SA LUPA
9	BRINGGING DOWN THE HOUSE
10	X-MEN 2

MATINEE PRICE: P90 THX cinema / P75 1level cinemas
Mon.- Fri. / 10am- 4pm (EXCEPT HOLIDAYS)

Ermita

536 -7809- 12

1	MATRIX RELOADED
2	SO CLOSE
3	DAYO
4	RING - 0
5	WALANG KAPALIT
6	HOW TO LOOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS
7	MATRIX RELOADED

Metro East - Marcos hway

682- 8193 / 8280

1	RING -0
2	MATRIX RELOADED
3	ANGEL SA LUPA
4	HOW TO LOOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS
5	WALANG KAPALIT
6	DAYO
7	MATRIX RELOADED
8	SO CLOSE

Novaliches

935- 3229 - 30

1	MATRIX RELOADED
2	TILL THERE WAS YOU
3	WALANG KAPALIT
4	X-MEN 2
5	HOW TO LOOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS
6	MATRIX RELOADED
7	RING - 0
8	ANGEL SA LUPA

Malabon Citisquare

288-0985 / 288-2575

1	DAYO
2	MATRIX RELOADED
3	WALANG KAPALIT
4	HIRAM

Star Mills- Sn. Fernando, Pamp.

(045)875-1927
(045)961-5270

1	BRINGGING DOWN THE HOUSE
2	WALANG KAPALIT
3	CONFESSIONS OF DANGEROUS MIND
4	DAYO
5	MATRIX RELOADED
6	HOW TO LOOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS

Imus

471- 8188 / 875- 3838

1	MATRIX RELOADED
2	HIRAM
3	ANGEL SA LUPA
4	HOW TO LOOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS
5	WALANG KAPALIT
6	DAYO

Sta. Rosa Laguna

(049)837-0907

1	MATRIX RELOADED
2	HIRAM
3	ANGEL SA LUPA
4	WALANG KAPALIT
5	CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND

Bacolod

441- 0453 / 0459

1	MATRIX RELOADED
2	RING - 0
3	BRINGGING DOWN THE HOUSE
4	JAIL BIRDS
5	WISH MASTER
6	WALANG KAPALIT

Iloilo

336- 8077 - 78

1	MATRIX RELOADED
2	BRINGGING DOWN THE HOUSE
3	AMAZON
4	WISH MASTER
5	WALANG KAPALIT
6	X-MEN 2

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 Parents are forewarned that they should guide their children in watching this movie. Parental Guidance is required

NOW SHOWING

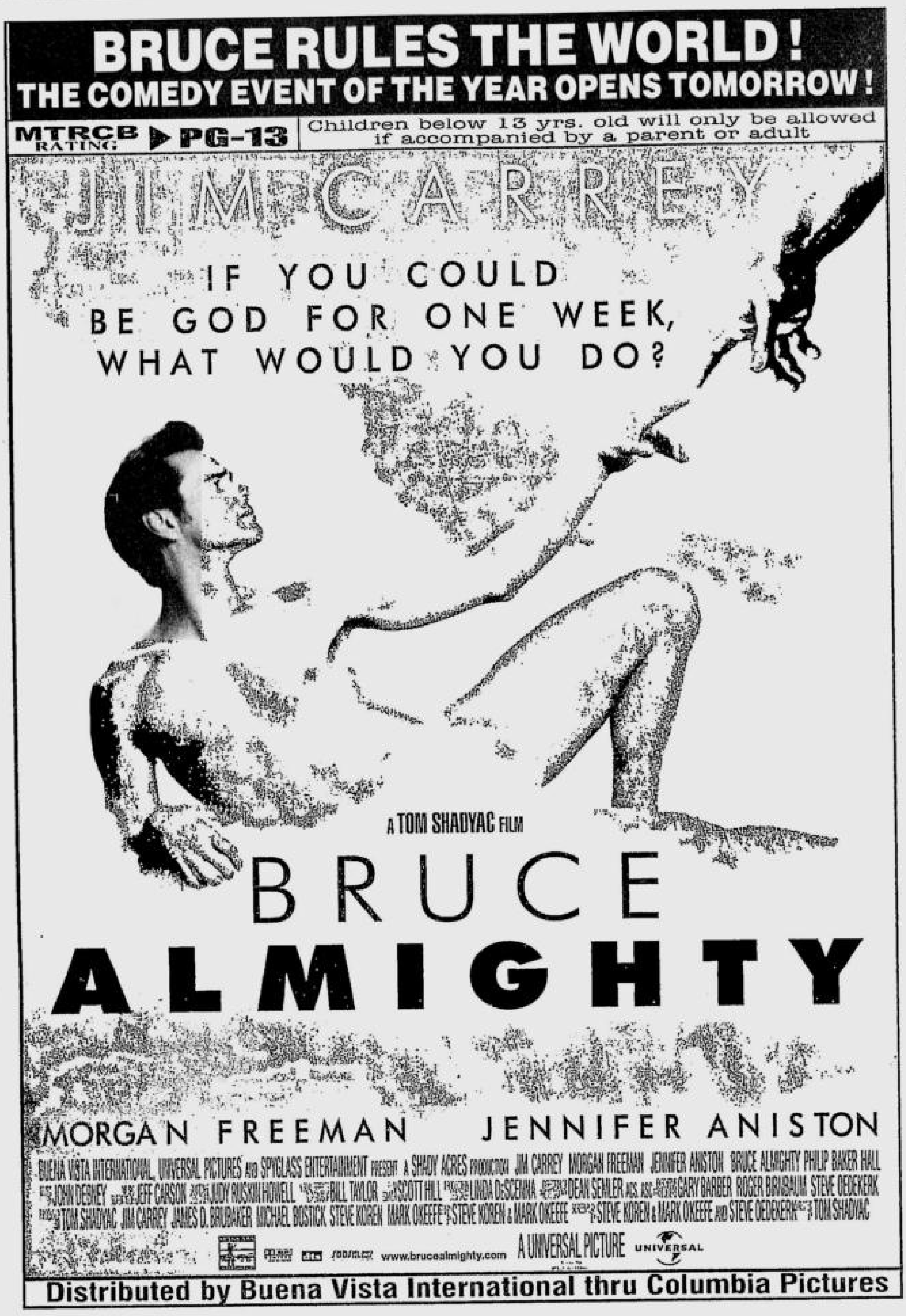
THE "RING" PHENOMENON GOES BACK TO ITS ROOTS TO FIND YOUR WORST NIGHTMARE... SADAKO!

RING-O
the BIRTHDAY

Ring - O

She haunted you after she died. Now, she'll terrify you to death when she's alive!!!

リング
0


BRUCE RULES THE WORLD!
THE COMEDY EVENT OF THE YEAR OPENS TOMORROW!

MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult

JIM CARREY

IF YOU COULD
BE GOD FOR ONE WEEK,
WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

A TOM SHADYAC FILM

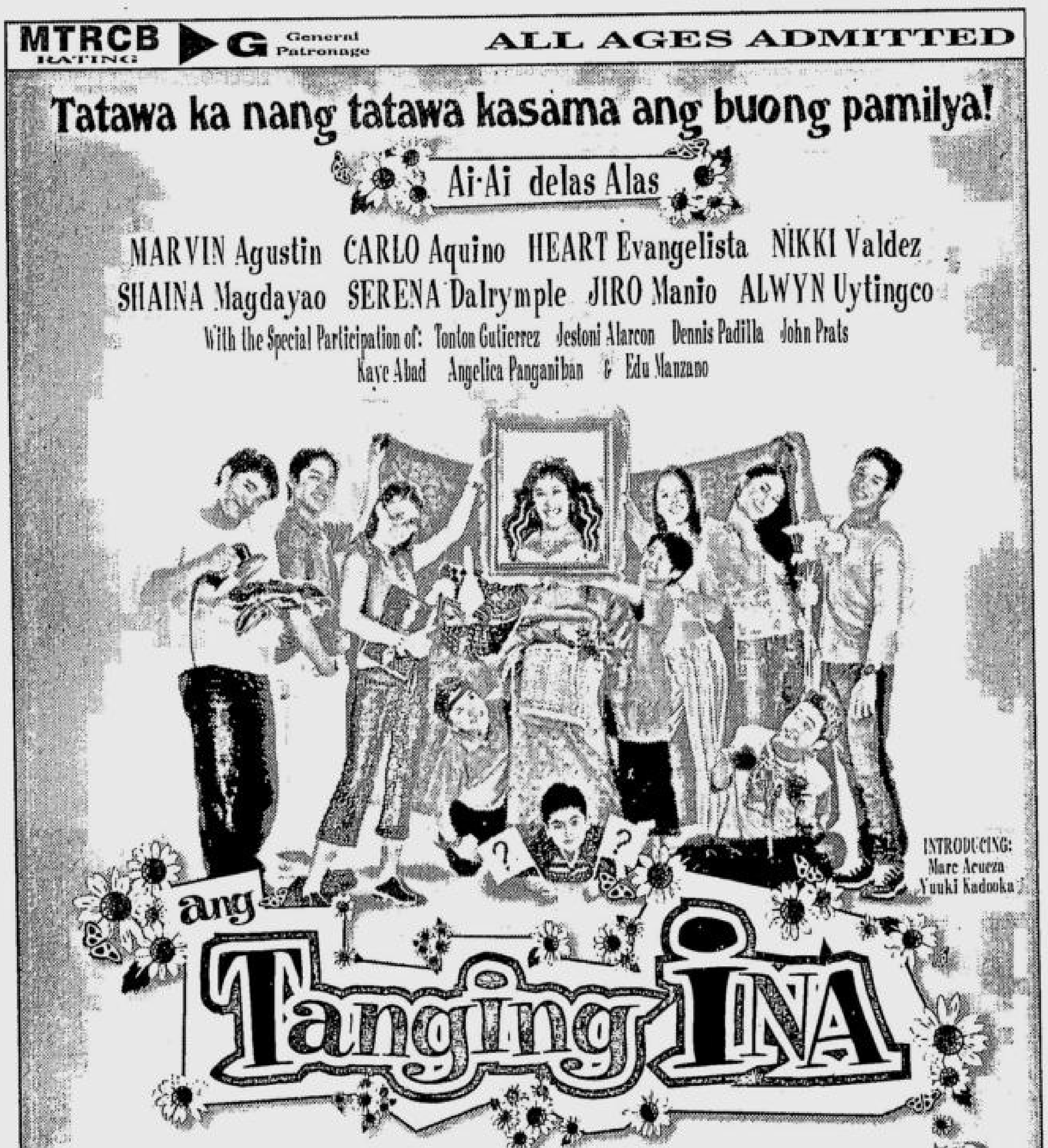
BRUCE
ALMIGHTY

MORGAN FREEMAN JENNIFER ANISTON

BUENA VISTA INTERNATIONAL, UNIVERSAL PICTURES AND SPYGLASS ENTERTAINMENT PRESENT A SHADY ACRES PRODUCTION JIM CARREY MORGAN FREEMAN JENNIFER ANISTON BRUCE ALMIGHTY PHILIP BAKER HALL
JOHN DEBNEY JEFF CARSON JUDY RUSKIN HOWELL BILL TAYLOR SCOTT HILL LINDA DeSCENNA DEAN SEMLER ACS, ASC GARY BARBER ROGER BIRNBAUM STEVE OEDEKERK
TOM SHADYAC JIM CARREY JAMES D. BRUBAKER MICHAEL BOSTICK STEVE KOREN MARK OKEEFE STEVE KOREN & MARK OKEEFE STEVE KOREN & MARK OKEEFE AND STEVE OEDEKERK TOM SHADYAC

www.brucealmighty.com A UNIVERSAL PICTURE UNIVERSAL

Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures


MTRCB RATING ▶ G General Patronage ALL AGES ADMITTED

Tatawa ka nang tatawa kasama ang buong pamilya!

Ai-Ai delas Alas

MARVIN Agustin CARLO Aquino HEART Evangelista NIKKI Valdez
SHAINA Magdayao SERENA Dalrymple JIRO Manio ALWYN Uytingco
With the Special Participation of: Tonton Gutierrez Jestoni Alarcon Dennis Padilla John Prats
Kaye Abad Angelica Panganiban & Edu Manzano

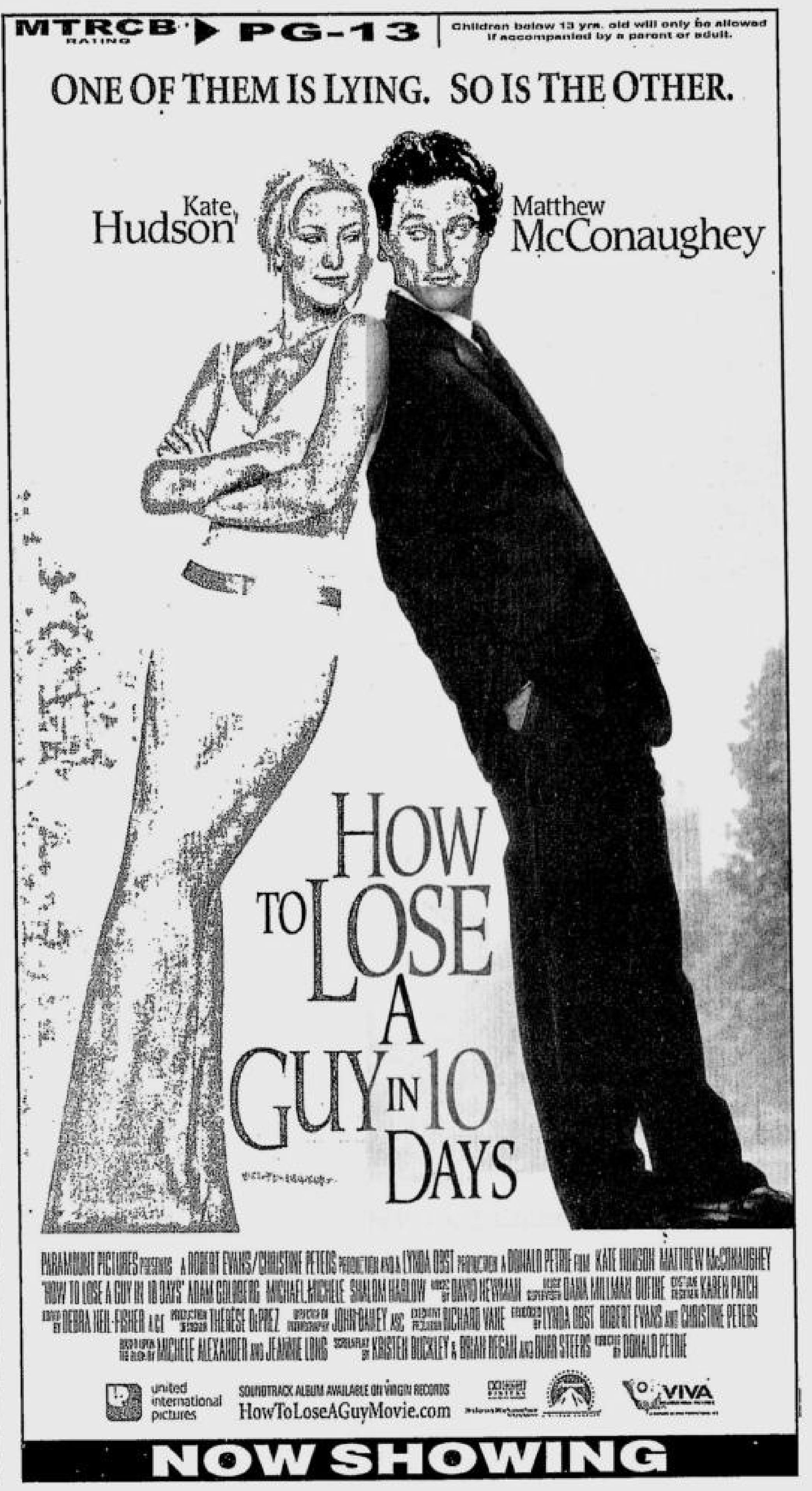
INTRODUCING:
Marc Acueza
Yuuki Kadooka

ang Tanging INA

DIRECTED BY: Wenn V. Deramas

STAR CINEMA

OPENS TOMORROW!


MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult.

ONE OF THEM IS LYING. SO IS THE OTHER.

Kate Hudson Matthew McConaughey

HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS

PARAMOUNT PICTURES PRESENTS A ROBERT EVANS/CHRISTINE PETERS PRODUCTION AND A LYNDA OBST PRODUCTION A DONALD PETRIE FILM KATE HUDSON MATTHEW McCONAUGHEY
"HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS" ADAM GOLDBERG MICHAEL MICHELE SHALOM HARLOW DAVID NEWMAN DANA MILLMAN DUFINE KAREN PATCH
DEBRA NEIL-FISHER A.C.E. THÉRÈSE DePREZ JOHN BAILEY ASC RICHARD VANE LYNDA OBST ROBERT EVANS AND CHRISTINE PETERS
MICHELE ALEXANDER AND JEANNIE LONG KRISTEN BUCKLEY & BRIAN REGAN AND BURR STEERS DONALD PETRIE

united international pictures
SOUNDTRACK ALBUM AVAILABLE ON VIRGIN RECORDS
HowToLoseAGuyMovie.com
VIVA

NOW SHOWING

MTRCB ▶ R-13

Strictly for 13 years of age and up

Looks can be deceiving.

Karen Mok Shu Qi Zhao Wei
夕陽天使
so close
www.so-close.com

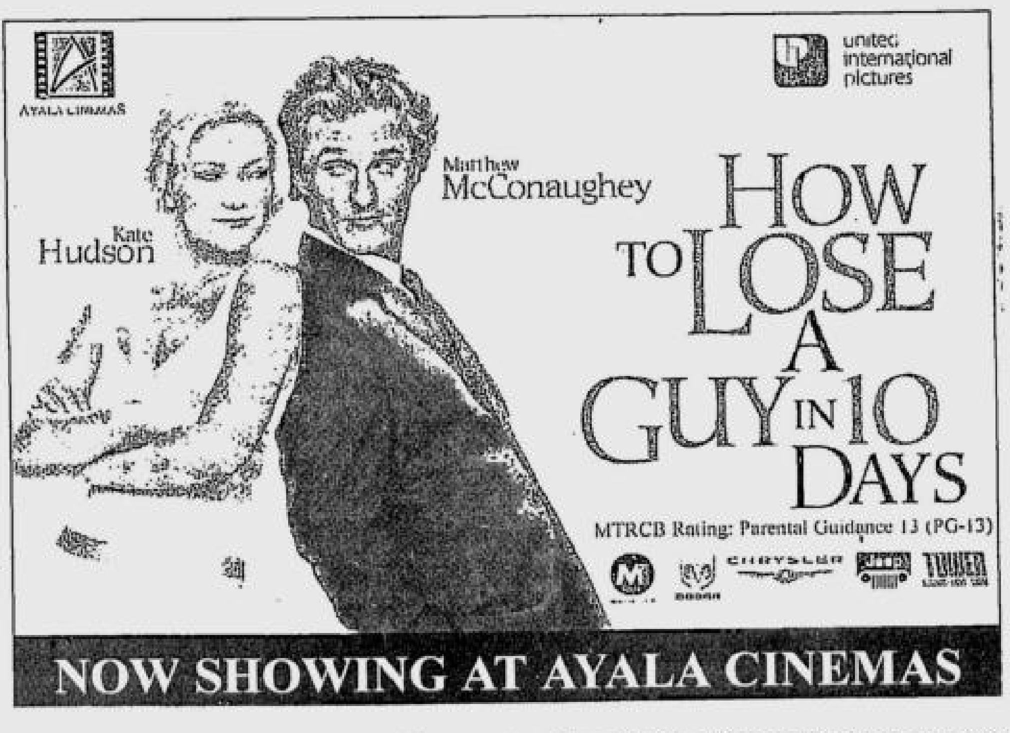
Sexy Asian angels display amazing martial arts techniques in 'So Close'

Lynn (Shu Qi) and Sue (Zhao Wei) are sexy and beautiful sisters whose parents were brutally killed by powerful underworld figures. Disillusioned with the law and armed with amazing computer and kung fu skills (not to mention an enviable fashion style), the seductive sisters become professional assassins, killing criminals for other criminals.

Gutsy and brilliant female cop Yat Hong (Karen Mok) relentlessly pursue the sisters, who are in turn fascinated by their tough adversary.

SO CLOSE, starring Asia's most alluring and talented young actresses, features the coolest, breath-taking martial arts sequences from world-renowned director Cory Yuen, Jet Li's martial arts choreographer in THE ONE, KISS OF THE DRAGON and ROMEO MUST DIE. Don't miss it!

NOW SHOWING


AYALA CINEMAS

united international pictures

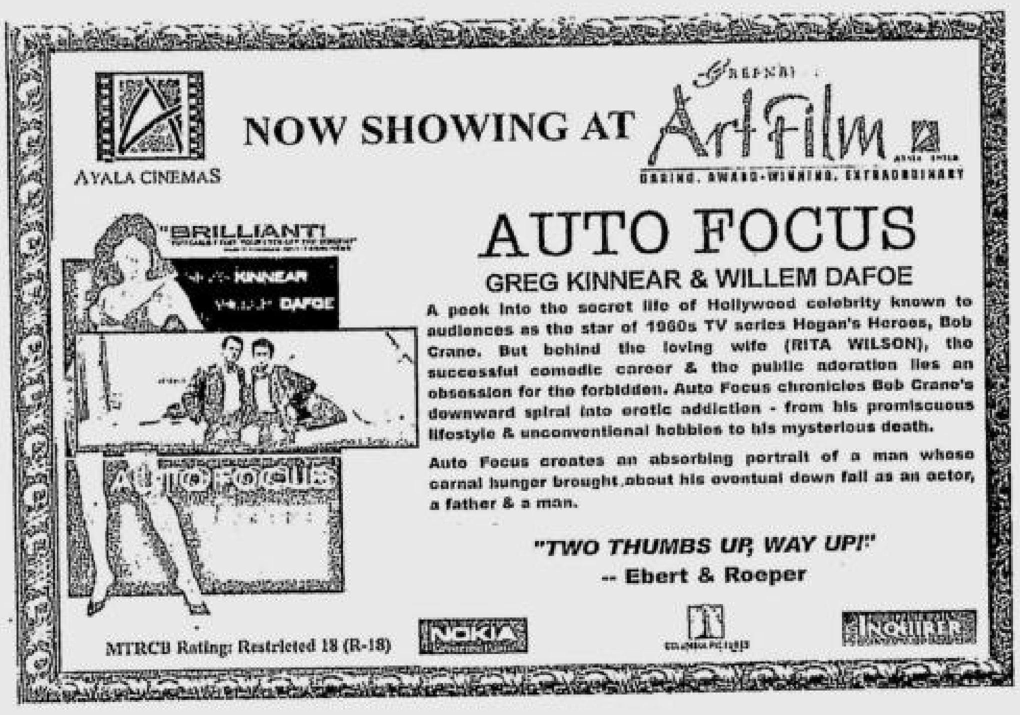
Kate Hudson Matthew McConaughey

HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS

MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13 (PG-13)

CHRYSLER

NOW SHOWING AT AYALA CINEMAS


AYALA CINEMAS

NOW SHOWING AT ArtFilm
DARING, AWARD-WINNING, EXTRAORDINARY

"BRILLIANT!"
KINNEAR
DAFOE
AUTO FOCUS

AUTO FOCUS
GREG KINNEAR & WILLEM DAFOE

A peek into the secret life of Hollywood celebrity known to audiences as the star of 1960s TV series Hogan's Heroes, Bob Crane. But behind the loving wife (RITA WILSON), the successful comedic career & the public adoration lies an obsession for the forbidden. Auto Focus chronicles Bob Crane's downward spiral into erotic addiction - from his promiscuous lifestyle & unconventional hobbies to his mysterious death.

Auto Focus creates an absorbing portrait of a man whose carnal hunger brought about his eventual down fall as an actor, a father & a man.

"TWO THUMBS UP, WAY UP!"
-- Ebert & Roeper

MTRCB Rating: Restricted 18 (R-18)

NOKIA INQUIRER

DID YOU KNOW...

Towering Bench model **Jon Hall** lined up with his friends at Alabang Town Center, where they watched the last full show of "The Matrix Reloaded" on its opening day last May 15. Jon recently made his big screen debut in "Xerex," where he starred with **Aubrey Miles**. He was seen lining up to watch "Matrix Reloaded" again last Sunday at the same place with another set of friends.

'Please leave actress and musician alone'

DOLLYWOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

STARS do their thing. We do ours. With the endless stream of information which is either tipped off to me or which I stumble upon unexpectedly, I've come to learn how to somehow sift the truths from the lies, the half-truths and white lies. Stars should consider it a nudge on the shoulder, to prompt them to make a quick reality check.

Of course, stars are also entitled to their privacy, but intrigues are a given in their profession, and if you can't hack it, then you are in the wrong business.

As my mom would always tell me, "If you can't stand the heat, then get out of the kitchen!"

Many times, friends and colleagues tell me that they have come across a blind item that somehow refers to me. I tell them, "If I react, then that means I'm guilty, so why bother? Besides there are hundreds of columnists and TV hosts, so it's presumptuous to assume that they are zeroing in on me."

Last Tuesday, I came out with a blind item about a former band member, his live-in partner who is an actress, and a singer. The singer claims the guy is the father of her 1-½-year-old son. And she insists that the guy molested her when she was in deep slumber because she had taken sleeping pills.

A concerned friend of the actress, who felt alluded to, called me up and came to the actress' defense. Here's her side of the story:

"My friend (the actress) is deeply hurt. She has been in show biz for 20 years and she has not been involved in any scandal. She works hard not to generate intrigues but to make a living.

"The singer is lying! She's the one who's so obsessed with the guy, that's why she's pointing to him as the father of her baby."

"Actually there are three other guys she is accusing as the father. We were the ones who insisted on a DNA test but she refused."

"Please leave my friend and the guy in peace!"

I just hope that this will finally put the issue to rest.

Tin-Tin's ring

IN MY previous column, I wrote that **Tin-Tin Bersola** had told me that her fiance **Julius Babao** had not formally proposed yet for their December wedding. Meaning, he has not given her a ring yet.

After that column came out, the bride-to-be happily relayed to me that what she got is even more precious than all the engagement rings ever sold.

"When Julius first brought me to the house he was building, he told me that I should consider that house as the ring because he had it built for us and our future kids and he wants me to be the queen of that house."

I almost had a diabetes attack after hearing about the romantic proposal. As a line of one of my fave love song by **James Brickman** goes, "It's not the flowers wrapped in fancy paper/ It's not the ring I wear around my finger/ There's nothing in the world I'd ever need/ Your love is the greatest gift of all!"

Pardon the mushiness. A romantic fool like me gets carried away by even just a tinge of sweetness.

Assunta's 'trauma'

BEING the true gentleman that **Bong Revilla** is, he would rather let the issue about **Assunta de Rossi**'s allegations on "Morning Girls"—that she had felt "raped" during the shooting of their love scene in last year's "Kilabot at Kembot."

Bong sighs, "I was shocked, but since I'm not guilty, why should I get mad? I'm more sad than hurt because Assunta is a friend and I never thought she felt that way during our shooting. I didn't have the slightest idea because we got along well during the shooting. And I always wear plaster when doing a love scene."

Bong's smiling eyes didn't dim a bit while we were talking, which showed he wasn't not really affected by Assunta's accusations.

His gorgeous sister **Andrea** showed me the text message of Assunta's husband, Rep. **Jules Ledesma**. The gist of his message is that it's an issue between Assunta and her mom and not between Bong and her.

Assunta claimed that her mom forced her to do the love scene. "Startalk" aired Assunta's interview taken during the promo of "Kilabot at Kembot." She was all praises for Bong and said the shooting went well, even the love scene.

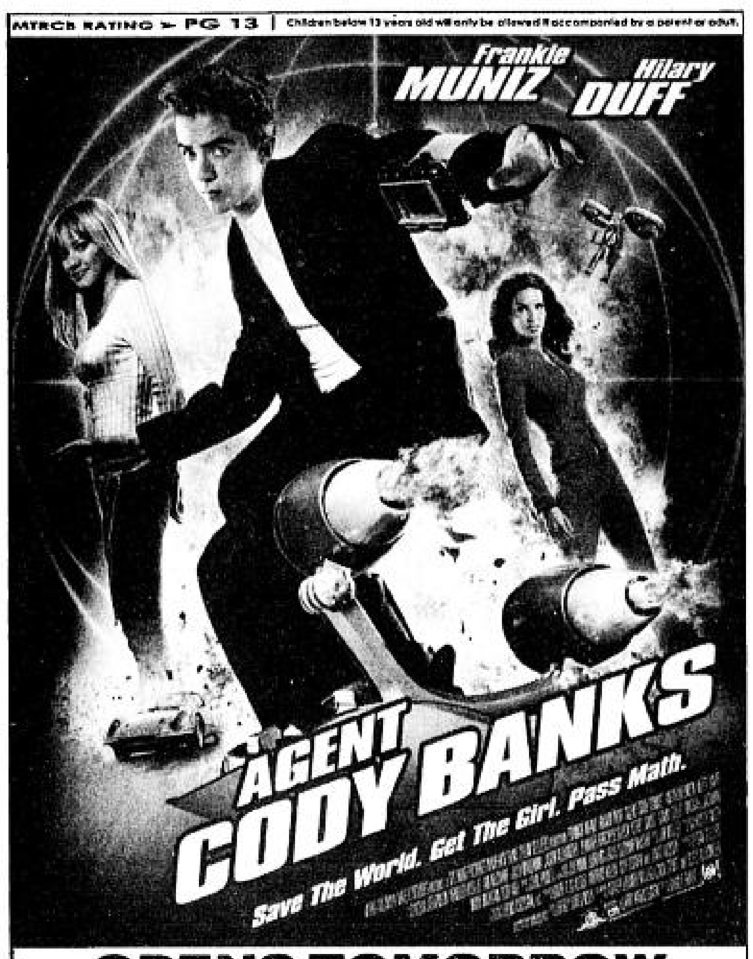
Fast-forward to today. Now she was saying she was traumatized. She's a married woman now and she should act like one. We all have free will, and no matter how many people force us to do this or that, the final say depends on us. Maybe she's in dire need of publicity because since she got married, Assunta has been eclipsed by new sex sirens such as the Viva Hot Babes and the Sex Bomb dancers. There are better ways of regaining the public's adulation.

Personal

MERCI beaucoup, Moses, for making me believe in miracles just when I needed one badly.

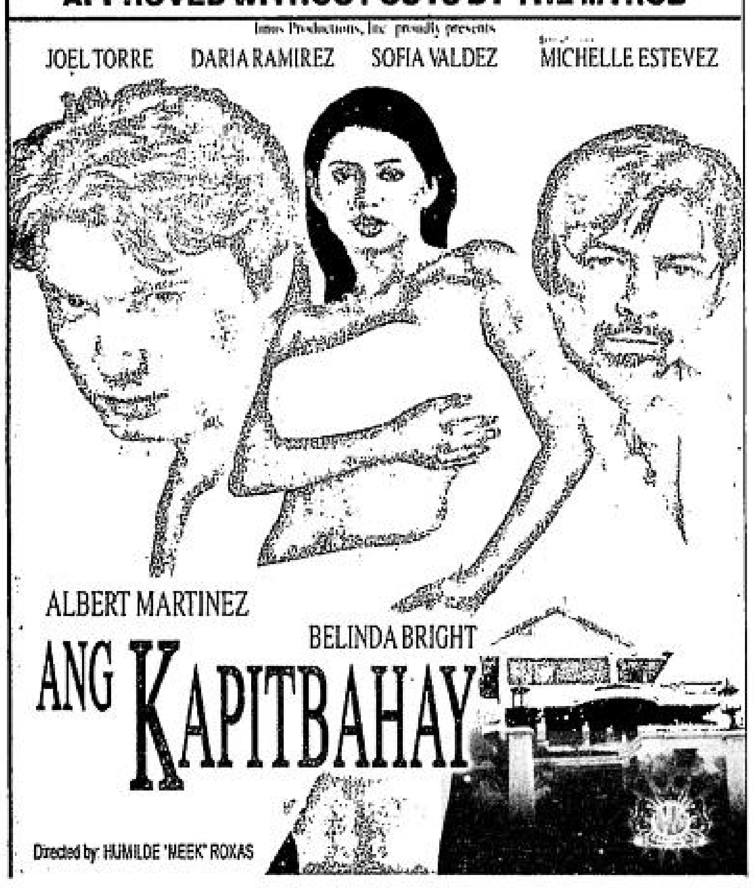
For feedback, e-mail friends_at_dsquare@yahoo.com

MTRCB RATING ➤ PG 13 | Children below 13 years old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult.



OPENS TOMORROW

OPENS TOMORROW
MTRCB RATING ▶ R RESTRICTED | Strictly for ADULTS No one below 18 yrs. may be admitted.
APPROVED WITHOUT CUTS BY THE MTRCB



THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	HIRAM
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	HIRAM
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	DAYO
B	HIRAM
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	636-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	DAYO
CINEMA-2	ANGHEL SA LUPA
CINEMA-3	HIRAM
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	MATRIX RELOADED
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	X-MEN 2
CINEMA-6	KIKAY
CINEMA-7	TILL THERE WAS YOU
CINEMA-8	MATRIX RELOADED
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	MATRIX RELOADED
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	MATRIX RELOADED
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	SO CLOSE
CINEMA-12	HOW TO LOSE A GUY
CINEMA-14	RING 0
CINEMA-15	WALANG KAPALIT
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
CINEMA 1	WALANG KAPALIT
CINEMA 2	MATRIX RELOADED
CINEMA 3	FINAL DESTINATION 2
CINEMA 4	NATIONAL SECURITY
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7	
Ali 1	ANGHEL SA LUPA
Ali 2	DAYO
Ali 3	SO CLOSE
Ali 4	MATRIX RELOADED
Ali 5	MATRIX RELOADED
Ali 6	WALANG KAPALIT
Ali 7	HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS
ARANETA COLISEUM	
MAY 25	PBA GAMES
MAY 26 & 28	NCA 7-COCK DERBY
MAY 31	PBA FANS DAY
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MATRIX: RELOADED R13 1:35,4:30, 7:25,10:20	MATRIX: RELOADED R13 11:45,2:40, 5:35,8:30	HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS P13 12:30,3:00,5:30,8:00,10:30

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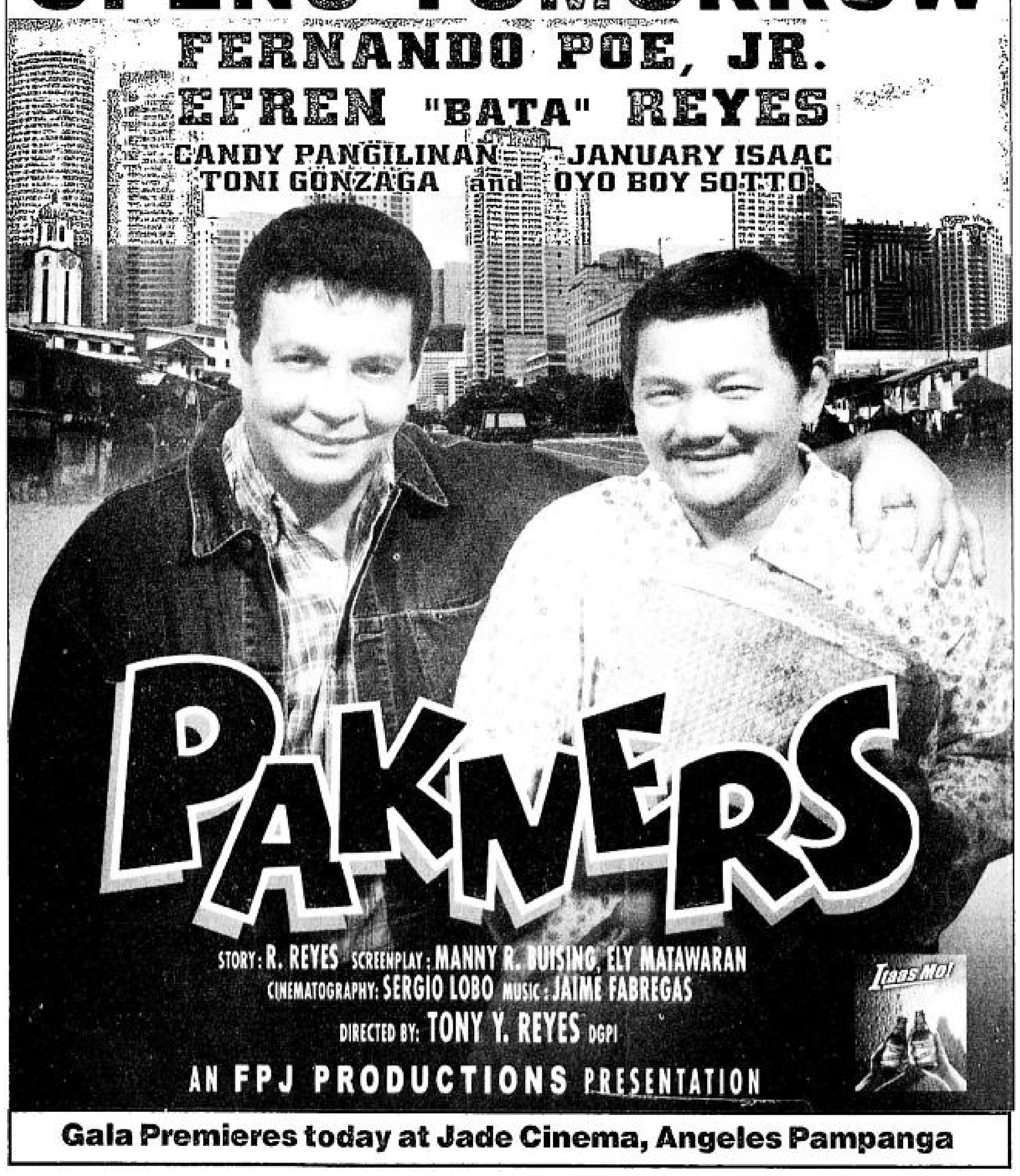

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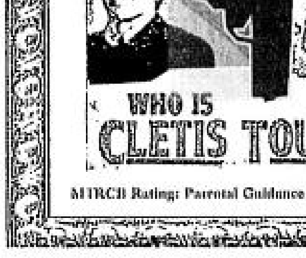

WHO IS CLETIS TOUT?

Getting the alias was half the battle.
Surviving it is the other.
WHO IS
CLETIS TOUT?
CHRISTIAN SLATER, RICHARD DREYFUSS,
PORTIA DE ROSSI & TIM ALLEN
A prison escapee (Slater) assumes the identity of a deceased man named Cletis Tout, but soon discovers that someone had a contract out on Cletis' life, so now the escapee has to deal with not only the police, but a hitman (Allen) as well.
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ENTERTAINMENT

E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Louie C. Camino

Donita gives up MTV to get married

By Leah Salterio

AFTER four and a half years as a popular Singapore-based video jockey for MTV Asia, bride-to-be Donita Rose did her last VJ stint on the channel last Thursday, but didn't say goodbye to MTV viewers.

Donita simply said on the air, "I will miss you guys!"

The 28-year-old VJ and movie star is set to marry web designer Eric Villarama, 26, on June 9 in California.

"MTV Asia told me they would still like to work with me as a freelance VJ," Donita said yesterday over a "thanksgiving lunch" with her future groom at The Forum of the Podium at the Ortigas Center. "I may not be seen regularly on the channel anymore, but if they need me to do occasional stints for them anywhere in Asia, I can still do it. That's why they didn't want me to say goodbye (on the air)."

She admitted she would like to go back to MTV Asia in the future, "but not on the same level as I was in the past four and a half years," she said.

"I'd love to do other things, like international movies," she said, adding that she learned that former MTV Asia VJ Sonia Cooling had auditioned for an Oliver Stone film and is most likely to get the part.

In 1999, Donita starred in the American-made movie "Legacy," with "Baywatch" and "Knight Rider" lead actor David Hasselhoff.

JUNE BRIDE. Donita will exchange "I do's" with Eric in Santa Barbara, California.

Donita and Eric will wed in the scenic Bacarra Resort in Sta. Barbara, California. The place was suggested by Donita's friend, Ana Marie Ramos, who will be one of the bridesmaids in the wedding.

"Ana is a screenplay writer in Hollywood," said Donita. "We asked her where is a nice place to get married and she suggested this resort which has been operational for just more than a year."

The wedding was originally planned to be held at San Francisco Land's End, a picturesque spot overlooking the Golden Gate Bridge and the ocean. It was there where Eric proposed to Donita in December 2001.

"But it's still cold in San Francisco at this time of the year," Donita said. "We wanted a place that is warmer."

The second choice to be the wedding venue was Napa Valley, with its golden brown vineyards and the scent of grapes, but Donita wanted a view of the ocean.

"Bacarra Resort somehow is similar to the place where we got engaged," explained the woman in love. "I checked it on the Internet and I fell in love with it right away. It is also overlooking the ocean."

After the wedding, Donita will return to Singapore, where she and her groom will be based. Eric set up his creative design company in Singapore.

"I asked him where he wanted us to be based and he chose Singapore," Donita said. "I told him 'I'll go wherever you want to go'."

Eric pointed out that Singapore is a good place to start. Five months after he and Donita got engaged in December 2001, Eric packed his bags and moved to Singapore to be closer to her.

Eric heads the creative department of the design firm Formuleight.

"I'm working with a great team and I'm helping position the company in Asia," Eric offered. "I don't want to leave it even when I get married."

In Singapore, Donita and Eric also want to see the fulfillment of their "joint dream" to launch a fashion line.

WOMAN IN LOVE. Donita and Eric will be based in Singapore as husband and wife.

PHOTOS BY ROMY HOMILLADA

"People have vowed to help us," Donita said. "We've talked to Chris and Butch Albert of Fila, and also to Ricco and Tina Ocampo of Sari-Sari. We have their blessings to start our own garment line. We don't want to just jump into it because one mistake and we could lose a lot of money. That's why we've been talking to people. Eric is very good in design and I love clothes. We can combine that and set up a fashion line."

Donita and Eric first met in 1988 in Clark Field, the former US airbase in Pampanga. Both their fathers were members of the US Air Force and had both been based in Clark. Donita's mom also taught in the school inside the base, before their family moved to Okinawa, Japan.

Eric is the best friend of Donita's younger brother, Paul Cavett. Donita and Eric lost touch when Eric's family moved out of Clark and went to Japan, where Eric went to high school. He went to college in San Francisco.

In November 2000, Eric and Paul bumped into each other at Starbucks in Daly City, California, and renewed their ties. For Donita and Eric, the rest is romantic history.

Viewing Oprah and Larry King, together and apart

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

EARLY this year, our family enjoyed a pleasant morning ritual: We viewed **"Oprah"** at 9 a.m. on Channel 25, then **"Larry King Live"** at 10 a.m. on Channel 27.

It was a double treat that often made for interesting and entertaining viewing, and we were sad when CNN's coverage of the war in Iraq moved King's show to an afternoon time slot.

The war has ended, but King's show has yet to return to its original 10 a.m. slot. Still, we've adjusted our viewing schedule and now view "Oprah" at 9 a.m., and "Larry King Live" at 4 p.m.

We miss their back-to-back airing, but "Oprah in the morning and Larry at 4 p.m." is better than no Oprah or Larry at all…

What makes Oprah so viewable? Her determination to go beyond the numbing limits that others have imposed on the TV medium. Unlike other TV producer-hosts, Oprah believes that viewers want much more than just silly, brainless programming, and that's what she gives them.

Their response? They've made Oprah the wealthiest and most successful woman working in media today. By refusing to think small and stupid, Oprah has become an inspiration to millions of viewers worldwide—and, we trust, to some young TV workers who now realize that they, too, can make a big difference for good on that much-maligned "boob" tube.

For his part, Larry has been interviewing people on CNN since 1985. His show has clicked with viewers with its now famous mix of celebrity interviews, political debates and topical discussions.

The program also features phone calls from viewers all over the world, allowing people everywhere to put questions to some of the world's most important or controversial luminaries.

Larry's ace is his knack for making even the most reticent guests feel at ease, while encouraging them to discuss the issues at hand. His show's guests over 18 years have included kings, presidents, peacemakers, dictators, show biz stars, and "ordinary" people with extraordinary stories to tell.

Larry has spoken to everyone who matters—from **Mikhail Gorbachev** to **Madonna**, **Nelson Mandela** to **Tom Cruise**, **Margaret Thatcher** to **Elton John**. After 40,000 interviews, it's easier to list the newsmakers and stars who haven't spoken to Larry, than those who have!

Dionne Warwick on TV

LOCAL fans of **Dionne Warwick** are looking forward to hearing the famous pop-jazz exponent sing at the Aliw Theater at the CCP Complex on May 30 and 31. Truth to tell, however, Warwick's voice isn't as great as it used to be, as indicated by her recent performance in a musical show we viewed on cable TV. Still, when the veteran singer chooses songs within her now lower vocal range, she's still enchanting to listen to.

Warwick's impending visit calls to mind her previous Manila performance decades ago at the Folk Arts Theater. She was vocally at her peak in that show, thrilling the audience with her adroit, audacious and even "wicked" flights of vocal fancy.

What we remember most about that SRO show, however, was Warwick's "impudent" way of singing some numbers with her back to the audience! It was like she was saying that her main focus was on the music, not really on pleasing her audience with the usual ingratiating ploys that most singers use to milk loud applause from their listeners.

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T-bill rates slide as banks swamp auction

INDICATORS

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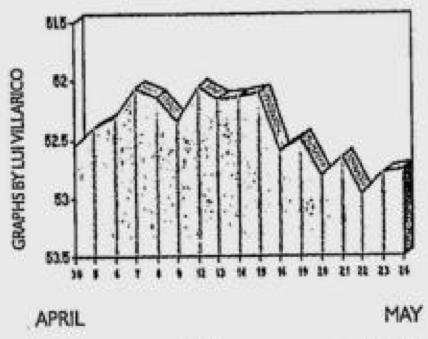


PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P52.76 = $1
As of 5 p.m., May 26, 2003

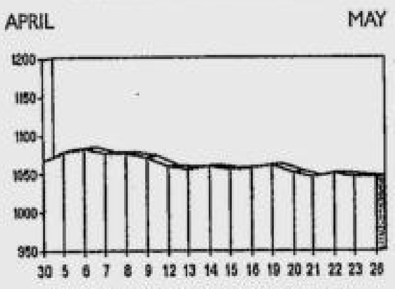
¥116.88 = $1
As of 5 p.m., May 26, 2003

GOLD: $370.00-370.50
per ounce Hong Kong, May 26, 2003

STOCK MARKET

Stocks end flat

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

SHARES ended little changed yesterday as most investors stayed on the sidelines amid a shortage of fresh leads and ahead of first-quarter gross domestic product data due out on Thursday, traders said.

The main index ended down 0.04 percent at 1,046.94 points. Turnover remained thin at P235.62 million against P187.74 million on Friday.

Most activity centered on a handful of selected large caps with some investors choosing to cash in recent gains.

"PLDT for one has been going up for a couple of weeks after its first-quarter earnings but today it declined on profit taking," said Nestor Aguila, chair of DA Market Securities.

Manila Electric Co.'s "B" shares also came under pressure. Concern about how the firm would finance the second phase of its refund of over-billings, estimated at around P29 billion, and a recent downgrade of its foreign currency rating by Standard & Poor's weighed on the stock.

Reuters

By Doris C. Dumlao

TREASURY bill rates fell across all maturities during yesterday's government auction as the cash-rich market bet on a softening of interest rates after inflation remained benign this year.

The 91-day T-bill rate, used by banks to benchmark their lending rates, averaged at 6.302 percent from 6.842 percent a week ago.

The average 182-day and 364-day rates likewise dropped to 7.157 percent and 7.804 percent from 7.761 percent and 8.41 percent during the last bi-monthly auction.

"The market is very liquid, with the market anticipating the lowering of key policy rates by the BSP (Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas) because of the low inflation rate," Deputy Treasurer Mina Figueroa told reporters.

Figueroa also noted that some P40 billion in fresh liquidity was infused into the financial system two weeks ago when certain government securities matured.

The Bureau of Treasury yesterday awarded in full its P9.5-billion T-bills offering, which was oversubscribed with as much as P25 billion tenders.

With this favorable development, Figueroa also said the 20-year treasury bonds to be auctioned today would likely average at 12-12.5 percent.

The market took its cue from the BSP's pronouncement that it might restore the three-tier scheme on its overnight borrowing to encourage banks to expand their lending activities rather than park their funds with the monetary institution.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura had said the measure might be revived as inflation was on a downtrend and there was some small demand from corporate borrowers.

The tiering system makes it less attractive for banks to place funds with the BSP as the published overnight borrowing rate of 7 percent will be applicable only to the first P5 billion kept with the BSP.

In excess of P5 billion, banks will be paid only 4 percent while in excess of P10 billion, the applicable rate will be further reduced to one percent.

He said, however, that key policy rates would be kept at current levels.

The tiering scheme was abolished by the BSP last March when the peso fell to a low 55.60 to the dollar amid the uncertainties over the US-led military campaign in Iraq.

At that time, the BSP also raised liquidity reserves by one percentage point and restricted banks' forward purchases of dollars to a maximum of six months.

Status quo at PNB seen as stockholders meet today

NO FIREWORKS are expected as far as the leadership of the semi-private Philippine National Bank is concerned when the bank holds its annual stockholders' meeting today.

Amid speculations that PNB chair Francisco Dizon might be ousted as chair due to reported differences with the nominees of PNB's controlling shareholder Lucio Tan, Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho yesterday said the board would mostly remain in status quo.

In a teleconference with reporters from Washington yesterday, Camacho said the only person in the PNB's 11-member board that would be replaced today was the representative of the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp.

Former PDIC president Norberto Nazareno will bow out of the board to give way to his successor, Ricardo Tan.

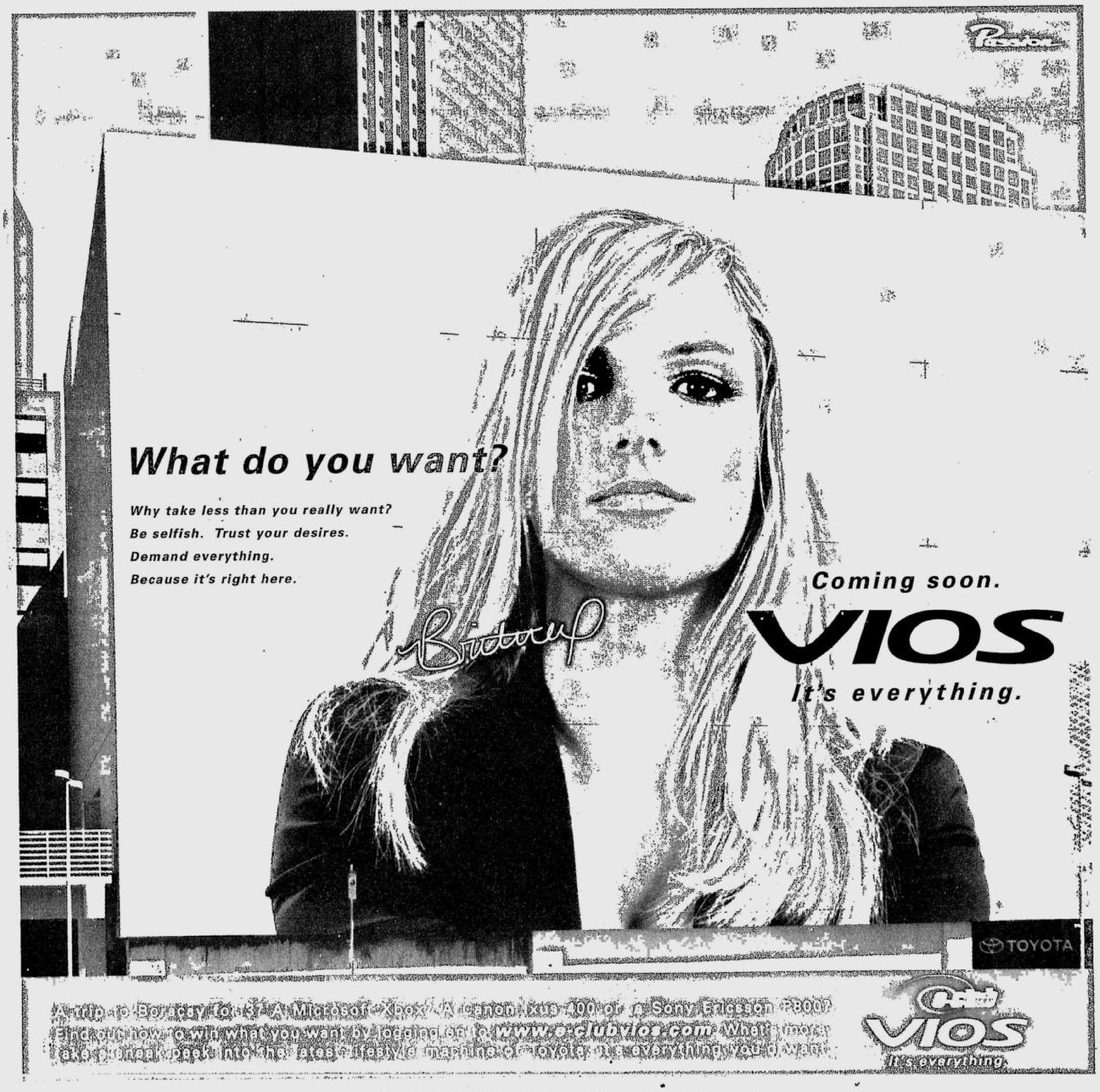
"The rest will be status quo, at least on the part of the government nominees," Camacho said. "The slate is still the same."

The government controls six out of 11 seats in the PNB board.

Doris Dumlao

TAN

DIZON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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Mad cow scares the bulls

MR. BEARBULL

Ron Nathan

NEVER mind what you read in the newspapers. This is what really happened at the sumptuous banquet last week. President Bush was looking forward to Maine lobster and a nice thick Texas steak, medium-rare. However, it is a White House tradition to adapt to the customs and cuisine of the visiting dignitary. So instead, he was served *dinuguan*, *lechon kawawa*, *bagoong* rice and *durian*, and it was served *kamayan* style. The President was all fingers and thumbs, and the FBI raised the terrorist alert from yellow to orange because they thought that the White House had been infiltrated with poisonous gas. It was only the smell of the bagoong and the durian. Gloria took full advantage of the situation and without beating around the Bush, she demanded 30 helicopters with spare parts, the lifting of tariffs on 8 export items and $30 million for military aid, payable in euros. She returned triumphant and the President felt bushwhacked.

During my monthly check-up, an 80-year old man walked into the doctor's office with a beautiful girl on his arm, looking very happy.

"You look very well," said the doctor. "What happened to you?"

"I took your advice, Doc, to get a hot momma and be cheerful."

"Actually," said the Doctor, "I said you had a heart murmur, be careful."

Here is an offer you can't afford to miss. For only $110, you can go to Hong Kong, 3 days 2 nights in a 3 SARS hotel.

Two weeks ago an elephant escaped from the circus at the Araneta Coliseum. The animal was reported to be "in heat." I don't know whether the elephant was sexually frustrated or just hot, because the heat was in tents. A passerby rang the owners, presumably a trunk call.

***

Whenever Greenspan speaks, it is my custom to give his remarks much prominence as I consider him to possess one of the greatest intellects on the planet. However, on this occasion, he clearly read my articles on inflation and deflation and repeated them almost word for word. It was uncanny but he even used the same words and the same phrases. I don't really think he cribbed my article, more likely we are telepathic. We look alike except that he is trimmer and slightly older, while I have more hair, my prostate, and not a single wrinkle on my forehead. This is partly because I stay out of the sun but mainly because my wife irons my face every day. It is painful, but as they say, no pain, no gain.

Suffice to say that he was cautiously optimistic about the economy but pointed to a decline in manufacturing activity and weakness in the labor market. As against that, there was an improvement in sentiment, a strong stock market, falling oil prices and some signs of a pickup in the tech sector. He added that deflation was not an imminent, dangerous threat but it warranted careful watching by the FED, who were studying ways to combat it, should the need arise. He was careful not to mention the falling dollar, which is a major stimulant. The media is giving the impression that the dollar jumped off the top of the Empire State Building and is in free fall. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Over the past year, the dollar has depreciated as follows:

Euro - 22.0 percent
Yen - 9.5 percent
Canadian $ - 12.0%
Australian $ - 15.5 percent
Pound - 12.0 percent
Chinese yuan - 0.0 percent (pegged)
Against the FED dollar index-12.6 percent
Atlanta FED dollar index- 6.6 percent

The above index is measured against 15 currencies, which I would think include the yuan, the Hong Kong dollar and the Ringgit—all of which are pegged to the US dollar, and are therefore zero. Between July 1995 and February 2002, the dollar appreciated by over 35 percent, so the current pullback is only a correction and could go further. Japan is furiously selling yen to prevent any further strengthening of the currency and Sony just reported a tripled loss. It is also believed that Thailand, South Korea and Singapore are all selling their currencies and the Bank of Thailand admitted this saying they would stand behind their exporters. If everybody tries to sell down their currency, there will be stalemate because the net result is always zero. In that case, investors might continue buying gold.

***

A number of readers have asked me how to obtain the highest possible return without risk. Many people have been duped out of billions of pesos, believing they could get returns of 3 percent to 10 percent a month. With interest rates falling, you cannot get even 1 percent a month tax-free. You can get 1 percent gross if you buy Philippine 10-year bonds, but not everyone wants to invest for such a long period and at present, you can only trade them through a bank at a price determined by market forces. If interest rates rise, the value of your bond falls.

A good alternative is Petron, which has stated that it would pay a regular dividend of 20 centavos. At P1.86, the stock yields 10.7 percent tax-free but you have just missed the dividend. If you examine the company's record since it went public, you will see that from 1995 to 1998, in addition to cash dividends, it also gave stock dividends, except for the year's 2000-2001, when it incurred a loss.

1995 30 centavos + 25 percent stock dividend
1996 30 centavos + 25 percent stock dividend
1997 30 centavos + 20 percent stock dividend
1999 20 centavos
2002 15 centavos
2003 20 centavos

Stock dividends are usually declared within three months of cash dividends.

In 2001, the company resumed payments of 15 centavos even though profits were not high. 2002 was a much better year, profits doubled and the 20-centavo dividend is well covered. I would not be surprised if the company reverts to giving stock dividends, maintaining the cash payment on the increased capital. If so, you will get capital appreciation as well, but I am recommending it as an income stock. The government owns 40 percent of Petron and Mr. Camacho has told the company that it needs the dividends to help finance the deficit. I suggest to Petron that they declare 10 centavos, half yearly, say May, November. That way, the government will get 20 centavos, plus 10 centavos this year, to swell their coffers, and investors will not have to wait so long for the next pay out. *mrbearbull@hotmail.com*

Perks for tourism projects readied

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE BOARD of Investments has agreed to grant incentives to roll on-roll off terminal system and domestic tourism operators that are upgrading their lodging facilities as part of the government's thrust to boost transportation and tourism in the country.

Based on the implementing rules of the 2003 Investments Priorities Plan (IPP), the BOI set the minimum tonnage requirements for Roro vehicles that would be eligible for BOI incentives such as income tax holiday.

BOI executive director Elmer Hernandez said Roro vessels should have a gross tonnage of at least 250 tons for those serving primary routes and at least 100 tons for those serving secondary, tertiary and developmental routes.

Hernandez said that all Roro operators plying non-primary routes would be deemed as locating in less developed areas and would be eligible for pioneer incentives.

Hernandez said the Roro incentives were designed to encourage businessmen to put their money in the government's plan to establish a seamless highway on the country's western seaboard that would take passengers and cargoes through five major islands—Luzon, Mindoro, Panay, Negros and Mindanao.

Aside from Roro vessels, Hernandez said that the BOI had likewise set minimum investment requirements for tourist accommodation facilities to spur operators to improve their hotels, apartelles, tourist inns, pension houses and resorts.

Hernandez said the BOI would grant pioneer or maximum incentives (at least 6-year income tax holiday) to hotels that would invest $50,000 per room (excluding cost of land) or no less than $5 million per project in less developed areas and at least $100,000 in projects in other areas except Metro Manila.

Resort projects would get pioneer status if their project cost hits at least $5 million in less developed areas and $10 million in other areas except Metro Manila.

Hernandez said the move should lead to a vast improvement in accommodation facilities nationwide to meet the rising domestic tourism brought about by the killer pneumonia scare in other parts of Asia and to support the government's "WOW Visit Philippines" program.

BDO aims to hit ₱1.3B in profit

By Elena R. Torrijos

PUBLICLY listed Banco de Oro Universal Bank, which is largely owned by retail magnate Henry Sy, is targeting to hit this year P1.3 billion in profit, or 24 percent higher than the profit registered in 2002.

In a press briefing yesterday, BDO president Nestor Tan said that as of the second quarter, the bank had posted substantial growth in profit over last year's level.

He said that growth should be driven by a 15-percent to 20-percent increase in loans and stronger deposit generation.

"For 2003, the bank is looking at further growing the business, with focus on the consumer segment. This will allow us to tap new markets, and increase our array of financial products. With these, we hope to create a strong balanced business, with asset-based revenue balanced with fee-based income," Tan said.

The bank will launch a credit card in partnership with Mastercard in the third quarter of this year and engage in bancassurance -- the cross-selling of insurance products -- as soon as the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas approves the bank's pending application.

Quedancor gets ₱1-B loan from Allied Bank

By Christine A. Gaylican

ALLIED Commercial Banking Corp. of the Lucio Tan Group will lend some P1 billion to the Department of Agriculture's credit arm Quedan and Rural Credit Guarantee Corp. (Quedancor).

Quedancor will, in turn, use the funds to re-lend to thousands of small farmers, fisherfolk, food retailers and rural and urban poor borrowers.

According to Quedancor president Nelson Buenaflor, the move is seen as a positive move by the banking sector, which has been very cautious in lending to the farm sector.

"This is in response to calls made by Agriculture Secretary and Quedancor chair Luis Lorenzo Jr. for banks and financial institutions to place their money in farm productivity and micro-financing programs and do their share in creating jobs, increasing food production and helping rural folk boost their income," Buenaflor said.

"The bank loan will carry an interest rate based on the 91-day Treasury bill rate plus 2.5 percent, or around 9 percent a year. But the rate is expected to drop once the Bangko Sentral allows the rediscounting of Quedancor's promissory notes," he added.

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INTEREST RATES

May 26, 2003
MART 1 Rates

Benchmark Interest Rates	MART1 26-May-03 (%)	MART1 23-May-03 (%)
1 Month	7.2942	7.3039
3 Months	7.2654	7.2500
6 Months	8.2135	8.2771
1 Year	8.5692	8.5885
2 Years	9.1423	9.2962
3 Years	10.0673	10.2327
4 Years	10.7308	10.8769
5 Years	11.1750	11.3096
7 Years	11.6461	11.7269
10 Years	11.7846	11.8788
20 Years	12.6096	12.7577
25 Years	13.1731	13.2615

SOURCE: MART/BLOOMBERG

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of May 26, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	15	15	15	15	12,100
Bank of the Phil. Islands	33.5	34.5	33.5	34.5	637,500
Citystate Savings Bank	14.5	14.5	14.5	14.5	2,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	25.5	25.5	25	25	350,400
Philippine National Bank	22.5	22.5	22.5	22.5	21,500
Phil. Savings Bank	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.5	400
Security Bank Corp.	10	10	10	10	65,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	17.5	17.5	17.5	17.5	11,000
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	111,000
First Abacus Financial	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	20,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1400	1400	1400	1400	2,220
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1040	1040	1020	1020	460
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	12	12	12	12	5,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.74	0.75	0.73	0.73	1,580,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	565	570	565	570	23,960
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	300,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	500,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.29	0.29	1,070,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	425	427.5	420	420	263,590
Ivantage Corp.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	170,000
Philweb Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	1,000,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. B	9.6	9.6	9.2	9.2	818,000
Petron Corp.	1.88	1.88	1.82	1.86	5,373,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	40,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.46	2.46	2.44	2.44	60,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.46	0.47	0.46	0.47	610,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	25,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	50,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.44	2.44	2.44	2.44	13,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	15.5	15.75	15.5	15.75	223,100
San Miguel Corp. A	54.5	55	54	55	42,500
San Miguel Corp. B	64	64	63.5	64	42,300
Phil Tob Flue Cur & Redry	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,600
Universal Robina Corp.	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	307,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	4.05	4.05	4	4.05	755,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.3	2.3	2.24	2.3	205,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.026	0.026	0.026	0.026	700,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.6	0.62	0.6	0.62	23,550,000
APC Group Inc.	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	100,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.6	1.76	1.6	1.76	560,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	100,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.25	6,710,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	60,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.06	2,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	7.7	7.7	7.6	7.6	27,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.085	600,000
Ionics Inc.	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	70,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.46	1.46	1.42	1.42	220,000
Jolliville Holdings Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	30,000
Keppel Holdings B	0.86	0.86	0.86	0.86	180,000
Medco Holdings	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	500,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	500,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.16	0.165	0.16	0.165	2,000,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	80,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.53	0.53	0.45	0.45	270,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Cen Azucar de Tarlac	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	1,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.74	1.78	1.74	1.78	115,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	16.75	16.75	16.75	16.75	35,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.41	0.42	0.4	0.42	4,110,000
Mondragon Intl Phils Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	250,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	150,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	11.75	11.75	11.75	11.75	14,000
PLDT 10% Pref Series Cc	10	10	10	10	1,000
Philweb Corp. - Warrants	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.002	1,000,000
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	5	5	5	5	7,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	4.85	4.9	4.85	4.9	1,574,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	450,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.18	0.2	0.18	0.2	120,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	0.82	0.83	0.82	0.83	4,490,000
Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	370,000
SM Development Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	4.7	4.75	4.7	4.75	1,642,000
MINING					
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	20,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	1,100,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	1,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.004	0.0042	0.004	0.0042	12,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	200,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	18,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	25,000,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.026	0.026	0.026	0.026	300,000

DISCLOSURES

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission has appointed Julio Elamparo as rehabilitation receiver of Uniwide Holdings Inc.

***

VITARICH Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 27, 2 p.m. at the Columbus Room of Discovery Suites, Pasig City. Stockholders of record as of May 28 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

***

SWIFT Foods Inc. announced the appointment of Susan Kalalo as compliance officer of the company. She also sits as senior vice president and assistant to the president.

***

ELECTED directors of Prudential Bank were Jose Santos, Francisco Delgado, Benedicto Santos, Roman Santos, Blanquita Gonzalez, Delfin Lazaro, William Tiosic, Augusto Estrada, Mario Santos Jr. and Horacio Santos Jr.

***

ELECTED directors of Steniel Manufacturing Corp. were Perry Pe, Genesis Goldi Golingan, Paul Camangian, Leonardo Siguion-Reyna, Percy King, Stanley Leung and Christopher Wilfried Heine.

***

PHILIPPINE Bank of Communications will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 17, 4 p.m. at the 10/F Training Center of PBCom Tower, Makati City. Stockholders of record as of May 9 are entitled to vote at the meeting.

***

KUOK Philippine Properties Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 27, 10 a.m. at the EDSA Shangri-La Hotel. Record date is on May 28.

***

MIC Holdings Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 16, 2 p.m. at the 8/F of DPC Place, Makati City. Stockholders of record as of April 30 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

***

FILIPINO Fund Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 20, 3 p.m. at the Camella-Dalla Room of Dusit Hotel Nikko, Makati City. Stockholders of record as of April 21 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting. ***Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

May 26, 2003 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.845166	1.000000	52.855000
Japan	Yen	0.007235	0.008561	0.452500
United Kingdom	Pound	1.383029	1.636400	86.491900
Hongkong	Dollar	0.108376	0.128230	6.777600
Switzerland	Franc	0.655828	0.775976	41.014200
Canada	Dollar	0.615696	0.728491	38.504400
Singapore	Dollar	0.490748	0.580653	30.690400
Australia	Dollar	0.555628	0.657419	34.747900
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.241938	2.652661	140.206400
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.225372	0.266660	14.094300
Brunei	Dollar	0.489327	0.578972	30.601600
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000102	0.000121	0.006400
Thailand	Baht	0.020195	0.023895	1.263000
UAE	Dirham	0.230121	0.272279	14.391300
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.183200	62.538000
Argentina	Peso	0.294483	0.348432	18.416400
Brazil	REAL	0.288354	0.341180	18.033100
Denmark	Kroner	0.134688	0.159363	8.423100
India	Rupee	0.018070	0.021381	1.130100
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.222442	0.263193	13.911100
Mexico	New Peso	0.082544	0.097666	5.162100
New Zealand	Dollar	0.491976	0.582106	30.767200
Norway	Kroner	0.126962	0.150222	7.940000
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014686	0.017376	0.918400
South Africa	Rand	0.107409	0.127086	6.717100
Korea	Won	0.000708	0.000838	0.044300
Sweden	Kroner	0.108819	0.128755	6.805300
Syria	Pound	0.020123	0.023810	1.258500
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024427	0.028902	1.527600
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000530	0.000627	0.033100

CHANGING TACTICS

RP to tap funds from abroad to shore up BOP

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE GOVERNMENT may have to change its borrowing strategy and tap funds from abroad to prevent the further deterioration of the balance of payment position (BOP) this year.

In a teleconference with reporters yesterday, Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho—who is in Washington as part of the delegation of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo—said he would sit down with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and Bureau of Treasury to discuss the implications of the government's current borrowing program on the BOP.

"We're still sticking to our borrowing program but we will consult with the BSP and (National Treasurer Sergio) Boy Edeza," Camacho said.

Camacho said the government would be "open" to possible changes amid concerns that its current borrowing strategy, that relies heavily on local borrowings, might worsen the country's external position.

This developed as BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the country might incur a deficit of about $500 million this year unless the government changes its borrowing tack.

Since the government relies on domestic borrowings to cover its projected P202-billion budget deficit this year, there are no fresh inflows of foreign exchange.

If the government changed its borrowing mix and tapped more foreign sources, it is possible that the loan proceeds will boost foreign exchange inflows and shore up the BOP.

The BOP measures the foreign exchange transactions between the Philippines and the rest of the world.

A deficit means that more foreign exchange goes out of the country, compared to what comes in, thus, putting pressure on the peso to depreciate against the US dollar.

The Philippines faces a BOP deficit this year—a reversal from the $660-million surplus position last year due to slower inflows from trade, investments and foreign borrowings.

Camacho, meanwhile, said that the government stands pat on its decision to allow the state-owned National Power Corp. to undertake its foreign bond offering.

"The game-plan is still to allow Napocor to go ahead and for the NG (national government) to give way," Camacho said. "We've told investors during our meetings with investors here that if they are expecting any issuance of Philippine debt, Napocor will be the first one."

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		SELLING	BUYING
1.	ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "A"	1,250,000	1,100,000
2.	ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "B"	1,500,000	1,250,000
3.	BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	650,000	600,000
4.	CANLUBANG GOLF CLUB	500,000	450,000
5.	CAMP JOHN HAY	230,000	200,000
6.	CAPITOL HILLS GOLF CLUB		120,000
7.	CELEBRITY SPORTS PLAZA	180,000	170,000
8.	CLUB FILIPINO	150,000	130,000
9.	COUNTRY CLUB AT TAGAYTAY	400,000	320,000
10	MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "A"	250,000	220,000
11.	MANILA GOLF CLUB (IND.)		10,200,00
12	MANILA POLO CLUB	2,400,000	2,200,000
13	MANILA SOUTHWOODS GOLF A/B	500,000/600,000	450,000
14	ORCHARD GOLF CLUB A/B/C	Please call	165,000
15	QUEZON CITY SPORTS CLUB	200,000	
16	RIVIERA GOLF CLUB A/B/C	Please call	Please call
17.	STA. ELENA GOLF CLUB "A"	1,600,000	1,300,000
18.	TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS GOLF	800,000	750,000
19	TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS GOLF	720,000	700,000
20.	VALLE VERDE COUNTRY CLUB	150,000	135,000
21.	VALLEY GOLF CLUB	300,000	260,000
22.	WACK WACK GOLF CLUB		6,200,000

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Digitel to post heavy losses until 2005

By Abigail L. Ho

GOKONGWEI-OWNED Digital Telecommunications Phil. Inc. expects to incur more losses over the next two years as it continues to spend for the expansion and promotion of cellular subsidiary Digitel Mobile Phil. Inc.

"In the next two years, we'll be losing quite a lot of money as we continue building up our cellular business. We don't expect to see profitability until the fourth year of operations," Digitel president and chief executive Lance Gokongwei said in a briefing after the company's stockholders meeting yesterday.

Digitel ended the first quarter with a consolidated net loss of P173.6 million from a net income of P44.9 million last year.

Its consolidated operating revenue likewise dropped 16.7 percent to P1.3 billion for the first three months of the year.

Digitel Mobile's Sun Cellular contributed P52.7 million to total operating revenue although Gokongwei admitted that marketing expenses to create brand awareness for Sun Cellular in the highly competitive cellular market depleted the company's earnings for the quarter.

"Our first quarter losses reflect our investments in the cellular marketing campaign," he said.

Digitel expects to expand its cellular coverage within the year by putting up another 400 cell sites to add to its existing 681 nationwide.

Poro Point top alternative port for bulk traders

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

PORO Point Industrial Corp. (PPIC) has surfaced as one of the country's top alternative bulk terminals to domestic traders because of its comparatively low tariff rates and greater efficiency compared to other Luzon terminals.

The Bases Conversion Development Authority said data from the Philippine Ports Authority showed that the Port of Manila's charges were 170 percent higher for general bagged cargo and 42 percent higher for bulk cargo compared to tariffs in Poro Point.

PPIA is a joint venture firm between BCDA and its subsidiary firm Poro Point Development Corp.

BCDA said the high rates in the Port of Manila have prompted bulk importers of commodities to divert their cargo from Manila to other ports of Luzon such as Poro Point in San Fernando, La Union that offer similar services but at lower rates.

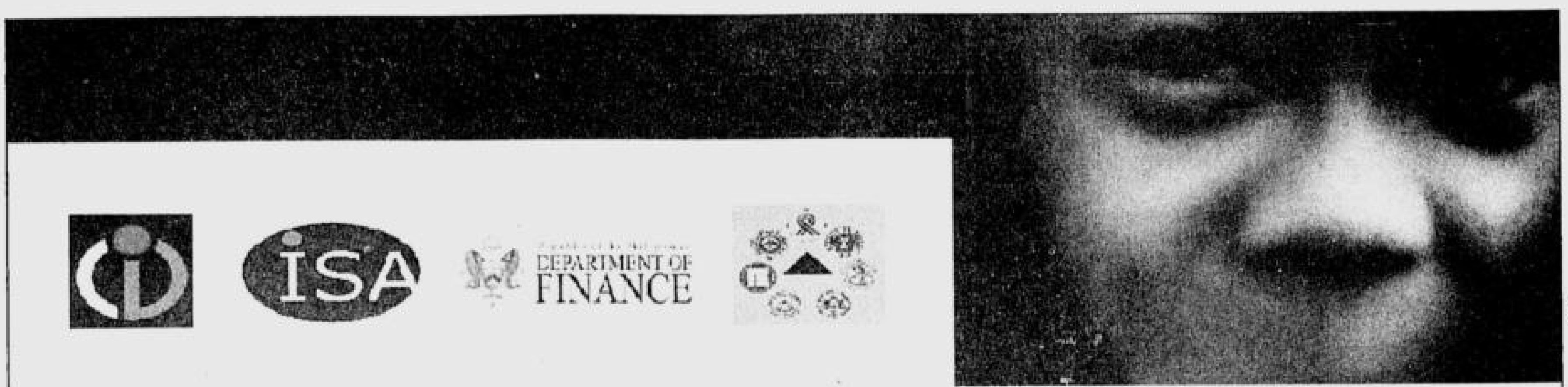
The BCDA also noted that the PPA study showed that Poro Point fared relatively better against other bulk terminal operators in Luzon and Mindanao in terms of bulk bagging costs and speed in discharging bagged cargo.

The BCDA said these service efficiencies have resulted in savings for vessel owners or importers such as faster turnaround time for vessels, lower manpower costs and reduced berthing fees.

BCDA is currently in the middle of modernizing its seaport facilities, boosting its tonnage capacity, constructing new warehouses and developing a 50-hectare industrial estate.

Poro Point is being developed as a centerpiece of the North Luzon Growth Quadrangle to attract investors in the area, which has been declared a special economic zone.

The BCDA added that the proximity of Poro Point to China, Indochina, Japan, Korea and Taiwan has made it an ideal seaport for the development of industrial and tourism facilities. The BCDA plans to privatize Poro Point to bankroll and manage its development projects.



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VIP-M/F-24H-SVC 472-7647 Romy

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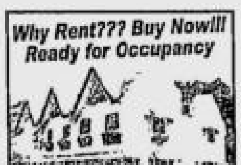

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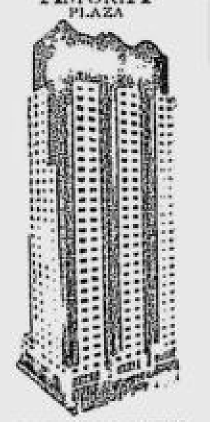

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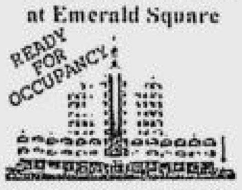

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INVITATION FOR NEGOTIATED OFFER

The Development Bank of the Philippines will entertain offers on a First-Come, First-Served basis at the Asset Management Department, 2nd Floor, DBP Head Office, Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City for the following properties:

CODE	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION		MINIMUM BID
REAL ESTATE				
MANILA				
	No. 6 Balete Drive, Quezon City	3 condominium units with patio and garage:		
AMD-ED-25a		2-units, 261.70m² (CCT Nos. N-24864 & 24865)	P	3,140,000.00
AMD-ED-25b		1-unit, 157.60m² (CCT No. N-24867)	P	1,891,200.00
AMD-MR-26a	Ocean Park Ave., Ocean Park Subd. (Bagbag), Quezon City	479 m² vacant residential lot (TCT No. N-213870)	P	2,155,500.00
AMD-MR-26b	Vinegar St., Llenado Subd., Karuhatan, Valenzuela City	2 adjoining vacant residential lots with total area of 465 m² (TCT Nos. V-61056 and V-61057) with fence	P	1,802,000.00
AMD-ED-27a	Monserrat Hills St., La Milagrosa Village, Marikina Heights, Marikina City	300 m² vacant residential lot (TCT No. 275009)	P	557,000.00
AMD-ED-27b		300 m² vacant residential lot (TCT No. 275203)	P	557,000.00
BATANGAS				
AMD-JB-28a	Bo. San Felix, Sto. Tomas	3 adjoining residential lots with total area of 1,672 m² (T.D. Nos 009-1676R, 009-1678R & 009-1679R) with bldgs. and imprvts.	P	2,888,100.00
AMD-JB-28b	Liza Cmpd., San Roque, Sto. Tomas	325 m² residential lot (TCT No. T-89539) with bldg. and imprvts.	P	1,520,000.00
AMD-ED-29	Bgy. Sta. Rita (Carsada), Batangas City	2 adjoining semi-commercial lots with total area of 590 m² (TCT Nos. T-43159 and T-43160)	P	2,100,000.00
BULACAN				
	Bo. Pulong Yantok, Angat	Vacant residential/commercial lots:		
CSP-03a		632 m² (TCT No. T-41100 M)	P	1,074,400.00
CSP-03b		530 m² (TCT No. T-41101 M)	P	901,000.00
CAVITE				
AMD-ED-30	Lot 3, Blk 9, Regino St., Prima Homes, Bucandala III, Alapan, Imus	41 m² residential lot (TCT No. T-1036389) with bldg. and imprvts.	P	196,900.00
NUEVA ECIJA				
AMD-JB-31a	Pabalan Subd., Abar 1st, San Jose City	283 m² residential lot (TCT No. 12490)	P	79,300.00
AMD-JB-31b		283 m² residential lot (TCT No. 12491)	P	79,300.00
AMD-JB-31c		198 m² residential lot (TCT No. 12493)	P	55,500.00
AMD-JB-31d		198 m² residential lot (TCT No. 12485)	P	55,500.00
PANGASINAN				
AMD-MR-32	Pagal District, San Carlos City	4 parcels of adjoining industrial lots with total area of 11,200 m² (TCT Nos. 32082 to 32085) with bldgs. and imprvts.	P	14,513,000.00
QUEZON				
AMD-MR-33	Mamala, Sariaya	62,108 m² interior lot (TCT No. T-392734) with bldgs. and imprvts.	P	24,613,700.00
RIZAL				
AMD-ED-34	Bo. San Isidro, Antipolo City	2 adjoining interior vacant farm lots with total area of 2,537 m² (TCT Nos. 373101 and 373102)	P	1,014,300.00
AMD-ED-25d	Bermuda Heights Subd., Bos. Ibayo and San Isidro, Antipolo City	336 m² subdivision lot (TCT No. 403152)	P	537,600.00
AMD-ED-25e		337 m² subdivision lot (TCT No. 403153)	P	539,200.00
AMD-ED-25f		300 m² subdivision lot (TCT No. 403154)	P	480,000.00
AMD-ED-25g		277 m² subdivision lot (TCT No. 403155)	P	443,200.00
AMD-ED-25h		322 m² subdivision lot (TCT No. 403156)	P	515,200.00
AMD-ED-25i		287 m² subdivision lot (TCT No. 403157)	P	459,200.00
CHATTELS (sale on "as-is, where-is" basis)				
AMD-MR-35	La Campana Cmpd., EDSA, Balintawak, Quezon City	1 lot heavy equipment for road construction	P	40,000.00 to 240,000.00

Forms for negotiated offers may be obtained from AMD-Acquired Assets.

For inquiries, please call telephone numbers:
893-7172 or 818-9511 loc. 2144/2218/3404 for Code starting with AMD; and
926-1686 or 818-9511 loc. 1411 for CSP-03.

(PDI-May 27, 2003)

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ERRATUM

In the ad of the United Nations Development Programme published in this paper May 25, 2003 Re: Vacant Positions, no. 4 job posting should have read: **ADMIN. & FINANCE ASSISTANT, RELIEF AND REHABILITATION COMPONENT**.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

AUCTION SALE

Nuestra-Damus Pawnshop
Makati City
Auction Sale on June 6, 2003 all unredeemed pledges during the month of January 1-31, 2002. Nuestra Br. II Pio-9:30am; Nuestra Br. I 10:30am; Damus Pawnshop-12:30pm; Nuestra Main - 1:30pm; Nuestra Br. IX Zapote 3:00pm.
Sons of J. Lanuza
Auctioneer

NUESTRA-DIAJADE PAWNSHOP LAS PINAS METRO MANILA
Will have its auction sale on June 9, 2003. All unredeemed pledges during the month of January 1-31, 2002. Nuestra Br. IV-8:30am; Diajade Main-9:30am; Diajade Br. II-10:30am; Diajade Br. I-1:00pm. - Sons of J. Lanuza
Auctioneer

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late Juanita Babar was extrajudicially settled by her heirs per Doc. # 534, Page 72, Book I, Series 2003 of Notary Public Renen Rivera of Paranaque (PDI-May 20, 27&June 3,2003)

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> JOHN 11:25-26

Message of Thanks

from the family of the late

CHUA TIAN HAN

For visiting us and being with us in our time of sorrows...
For praying with us and for us...
For the beautiful flowers to express compassion...
For thinking of us in our hour of grief...
For attending the services and funeral rites...
For all that you have done to console our hearts...

Our sincerest gratitude.

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INTERMENT NOTICE

Name	Date of Interment	Time	Place of Interment	Place of Wake
LYDIA R. AQUINO	May 27	1:00 PM	Holy Gardens Memorial Park, Taytay, Rizal	102 Ma. Clara St. Brgy. Sta. Ana, Taytay, Rizal
ALLAN A. MARTIN	May 27	9:00 AM	Holy Gardens Memorial Park, Taytay, Rizal	Holy Gardens Memorial Chapel B, Angono, Rizal

www.holygardens.com
E-mail address: sales@holygardens.com

Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. Matthew 10:39

OSCAR A. MISA

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord on May 25, 2003 at the age of 55.

His bereaved wife Evelyn; children **Joseph, Francis** and **Paulo**; brothers **Angel** and **Tony**; sisters **Linda** and **Nene**; in-laws and other relatives request your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at Loyola Memorial Chapels, Guadalupe, Makati City.

Interment will be on Thursday, May 29, 2003 at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at Loyola Memorial Chapel.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring... **INQUIRER OBITUARIES** WE ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS and bank-to-bank payments

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DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT • MESSAGE OF THANKS
DEATH ANNIVERSARY • REQUIEMS • FREE OBIT

CONSEJO (Conching) CLEMENTE SALUMBIDES

Peacefully joined our Lord on May 26, 2003 at the age of 93.

Her brother **Gilberto Salumbides**; nephews and nieces, grand and great grandnephews and grandnieces request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Chapel F of La Funeraria Paz, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Thursday, May 29, 2003 at North Cemetery after the 8:00 a.m. Mass.

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IN THE MATTER OF SAFEGUARD MEASURES APPLICATION AGAINST THE IMPORTATION OF FLOAT GLASS FROM VARIOUS COUNTRIES FILED BY ASAHI GLASS PHILIPPINES (AGP)

NOTICE OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Pursuant to Rule 5.2 of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of RA 8800 "The Safeguard Measures Act" which provides that **"the Secretary when establishing that the application of a safeguard measure will be in public interest shall take into consideration the following factors; among others: (i) whether the imposition of the provisional measure will result in political and economic crisis: and (ii) the extent to which such imposition will cause a shortage of a product under consideration"**, the Secretary of Department of Trade and Industry issued on 23 April 2001, Department Order No. 37 (Internal Procedure of RA 8800 — Safeguard Measures Act) mandating the Bureau of Import Services (BIS), Board of Investments (BOI) and Bureau of Trade Regulation and Consumer Protection (BTRCP) to jointly conduct a public consultation to establish that the application of safeguard measures will be in the public interest.

In view thereof, notice is hereby given that a public consultation will be held on the above Safeguard Measures application on 02 June 2003 at 1:00 PM at the 6th Floor, Center ConferenceRoom, DTI Head Office, 361 Senator Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City.

All interested parties are hereby enjoined to attend and present their evidence in support of their respective positions.

For particulars, you may contact the Bureau of Import Services — Import Strategy Division (BIS-ISD) at telephone numbers 895-9228 / 896-4431 / 895-5474.

LUIS M. CATIBAYAN
Officer-in-Charge

(PDI – May 27, 2003)

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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
NATIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Housing Authority (NHA) is inviting interested contractors who have completed similar projects costing at least 50% of the proposed contract and accredited with PCAB to bid for the contract listed below:

Contract Package/Location	Approved Budget (mil.)	PCAB License	Work Description/ Duration
Mamanga Daku, Construction of 35 Housing Units, Plaridel, Misamis Oriental	P3.100	"B"/MA for Building	Construction of 35 units low-cost housing units.

A. Interested contractors are required to secure from the BAC Secretariat Office, 2nd Floor, NHA Main Building, Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City the list of basic requirements for registration and Eligibility Statement Forms. Only contractors duly registered with the NHA shall be allowed to participate in the eligibility screening. Unregistered bidders must register not later than the deadline of submission of letter of intent on **June 3, 2003**.

B. The schedules of the eligibility screening and bidding activities are as follows:
Issuance of Application for Eligibility Forms – **May 20-June 6, 2003**
Deadline of Submission of Eligibility Req'ts – **June 10, 2003, not later than 10:00 a.m.**
Issuance of Bid Documents – **June 10-19, 2003**
Pre-Bid Conference – **June 24, 2003 (10:00 a.m.)**
Dropping of Bids/Opening of Bids – **July 8, 2003, not later than 10:00 a.m.**

C. Eligibility requirement forms may be obtained upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P200.00 at the NHA-BAC Secretariat Office with Tel. Nos. 929-80-16 and 928-45-61/65 local 262.

D. Bid documents shall be issued to eligible bidders upon payment of non-refundable fee of P2,500.00.

E. Bid security/deposits shall be in the form of cash, manager's or cashier's check only.

F. The provisions of the IRR of EO 40, shall govern all particulars relative to registration, eligibility screening, bidding, evaluation of bids, post-qualification and award of contract.

G. NHA reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive formally any minor defect thereon, and accept the offer most advantageous to the Government.

(Sgd.) JOSEPH PETER S. SISON
Assistant General Manager
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI–May 20 & 27, 2003)

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Editor Aries Espinosa

Sun Cellular and Hewlett Packard join forces

SUN CELLULAR, the latest player in the mobile services industry, and Hewlett Packard, a leading global provider of computing and imaging solutions and services announced a multi-million contract to deliver technical expertise and consulting services in data warehouse architecture, deployment and management. The partnership would enable Sun Cellular to effectively manage data, allowing the company to better attain and sustain a competitive edge over other industry players.

Hewlett Packard (HP), a global leader in technology and business solutions, is an IT powerhouse whose offerings range from infrastructure, personal computing, access devices to global services, imaging and printing. The company's commitment to innovations and inventions places it at the forefront of IT technology. The collaboration between Sun Cellular and Hewlett Packard guarantees subscribers practically the highest level of mobile services.

Digitel GSM business unit head Charles Lim said, "Data management is of key importance to us, simply because we place high value on customer relations. There's no room for data loss in the telecommunications industry. We need a data storage system that could scale easily and provide error-free back-up procedures. This is primarily the reason why we chose Hewlett Packard. They can easily adapt to our demands, and more importantly, can deliver on time."

Hewlett Packard designed an all-inclusive integrated solution that involves data modeling, mapping, extraction, transformation, loading, software and networking requirements. For Sun Cellular, this would allow them to effectively manage subscriber profiles. The technology attempts to treat each customer as an individual, not simply as an account or a mobile member. "We understand that data management should be efficient enough to enable us to better understand the values and needs of our customers. This leads to better opportunities for long-term customer retention," Lim added.

In addition to data warehousing, the agreement between Sun Cellular and Hewlett Packard includes the supply on Intra-Domain Mobility Management Protocol (IDMP) which is dubbed as an alternative two-level hierarchical mobility management solution. Mobility solutions take mobile phones into a new application era by allowing subscribers the freedom to attend to their business using their mobile units. As more and more customers become very particular with mobile features and services, managed mobility services enable operators to continuously improve standard services and enhance the level of individualized attention to given customers.

Lim concluded, "We are pleased to be working closely with Hewlett Packard in upgrading the quality of mobile services. The partnership strengthens our position as a strong entrant in the mobile services arena and is definitely in line with our business expectations for this year."

PHILIPPINE MARKETING ASSOCIATION, INC.

ALL SET FOR PMA'S 34TH NATIONAL MARKETING CONFERENCE
The Philippine Marketing Association (PMA) will hold the 34th National Marketing Conference (NMC) on May 28 and 29 at the Grand Ballroom of the Westin Philippine Plaza. This year's theme 'Creative Marketing: New Markets, New Rules, New Strategies' focuses on the critical role creative marketing plays in our present society where changes is not only inevitable but rapidly and constantly happening. In photo are the members of the NMC executive committee: (standing from left) Edmund Alcaraz, chair, stage; Herminio del Rosario, chair, marketing; Cergen Go, chair, supplements; Dr. Leonardo Garcia Jr., PMA president; Henry Tenedero, overall chair; and Miguel Ramos, vice chair. Seated from left: Pamela Adriano, chair, admin; Ting Samonte, chair, exhibit; Ma. Veronica Hizon, NMC director; Josephine Gomez, chair, program; and Ruby Ramores, chair, ways and means. For inquiries, call 893-7127, 892-3144 and 813-0466 or email pma@philonline.com.

Good morning temptations available at The Podium

CARE for a whiff of freshly-brewed coffee wafting in the air? How about oven-fresh goodness of hot buttered croissants, perfect with a refreshing glass of fresh fruit juice? Or a sizzling American breakfast of bacon and eggs? Try a hefty serving of your favorite Filipino fried rice with your choice of sweet tocino, garlic longanisa or beef tapa? Breakfast choices abound as you indulge your discriminating palate with these morning temptations at The Podium.

Now you have more than enough reason for a wake up call - other than an early morning meeting in the office. As the sun rises in Ortigas Center, The Podium welcomes its regular habitues with freshly-brewed coffee and tempting breakfast sets as early as 7:00 a.m.

Walk on over to Delifrance right inside the mall, offering eight new breakfast sets. Feast on sausages, eggs, fruits, or vegetarian choices, not to mention an array of French-style breads paired with hot chocolate or a fresh fruit concoction to start your day right.

Dome Café offers Continental breakfast sets to tease your palate, as well as freshly-baked pastries and their famous Arabica brewed coffee... just the way Australians love it. Don't miss their coffee jelly for a truly happy ending.

Of course, the always popular Starbucks line up of hot and cold coffees: espressos, machiattos, mochas and lattes, all go well with creamy ensaimadas, cinnamon rolls, and fanciful cake slices. Or have it the healthy way with their garden-fresh salads and tuna sandwiches.

For heavy breakfast lovers, try UCC Vienna Café's all-time traditional Filipino favorites. Fresh salad varieties abound: want to try something exotic? How about Japanese Unagi (eel) for starters? Don't miss their irresistible cake selections, perfect with hot cocoa or fresh fruit juices.

What a great way to start your day. Savor these fresh morning temptations only at The Podium, located at 18 ADB Ave., Ortigas Center.

WE'RE NO. 1
As part of the Business Orientation Program of the American Chamber of Commerce, select representatives from UP, ADMU, UA&P, San Beda and FEU recently trooped to the Inquirer office to gain insight on the fast-paced world of newspaper publication. Accompanying the tour are (center) Leslie Ann Murray from the American Chamber of Commerce and Celine Madamba, corporate relations manager of the Inquirer.

SWI BAGS AWARDS IN BENCH PRESS OPEN

SLIMMERS World International has proven its excellence once again in power lifting in the recently concluded National Bench Press championships held at the Farmer's Plaza last March 30. The Slimmers World International power lifting team sent a total of 8 delegates to the country's most prestigious power lifting competition, composed mostly of Slimmers World clients and fitness trainers. The team garnered a total of 5 gold medals, 2 silver medals, 3 bronze medals, with Anjanette Pe and Maureen Sun bagging the women's national best lifter and national sub-junior best lifter respectively. Slimmers World has once again proved that they deliver the services they guarantee to render. Other winners in the women's category are: Audrey Ortiz, 60 kg class (gold medal / novice division); Kathleen Ong, 90 kg (gold medal / junior and novice division). In the men's category: Arturo Feliciano, 67.5 kg class (bronze medal / novice division); Christian Torres, 82.5 kg class (silver medal / juniors division); Marty De Leon, 82.5 kg class, (silver medal / juniors division); and Renan Morales, 90 kg class (silver medal / novice division - bronze medal / juniors division).

Slapshock goes extra strong

LOCAL rock's hottest rap metal band today joins forces with Red Horse extra strong beer. Slapshock, who snagged both the artist of the year and band of the year titles in NU Rock Awards 2002, just signed a one year deal with Red Horse beer last March 18.

Present during the contract signing were brand manager Manny Ongkiko, group members Lee Nadela, Chi Evora, Jerry Basco, Lean Ansing and Jamir Garcia, San Miguel marketing head Glenn Glinoga, group product manager Eric Bartolome, Red Horse brand manager Anna Lisbona and brand assistant Grace David.

This alliance means Slapshock will be performing their heart-thumping, adrenaline-pumping music in various Red Horse events slated this year.

When asked what people can expect from this collaboration, Slapshock lead man Jamir Garcia says, "I think our band has the power; the kick in our music. It's really like Red Horse extra strong beer. We both got intensity and impact. I guess by telling you that, I've already given you an idea on how this team-up will be like."

SEARCH FOR MISS MAKATI
Partners for this year's 'Search for Miss Makati' pledge their commitment to support the pageant. Since 1990, the pageant has produced women of beauty and character who are also both stunning and sharp. It has become one of the most celebrated highlights of the annual Makati Foundation Day celebrations. Coronation night will be tonight at 7:00 p.m. at the Ballroom of the Mandarin Oriental Hotel, Makati. The show will be hosted by Eddie Mercado with guest performers Jaya and Jon Santos. For ticket inquiries, call tel. nos. 896-0277 and 896-2464. In photo during the contract signing are (seated from left): Boomi Patino, fashion marketing officer for events and promo of Freeway; Gener Gozum, long gowns sponsor; Charisse Chuidian, corporate communications director of Mandarin Oriental Hotel (official residence of the candidates); Jackie Maniquis, director; Linda Orro, vice president for finance of Destiny Cable (official broadcast station); and Bunny Chua of Milkwear. Standing from left: Arlene 'Macky' Marcos, head of ads and promo of Destiny Cable; Kristine Grace Braqueza, Miss Tourism 2002; Jan Christine Supan, Miss Makati 2002; Ramil Bautista, assistant marketing manager and Cienna Cortez of Destiny Cable Inc.

Clips

Free training for singers with potentials

AVAIL of the free training of Rhythm Productions, a talent agency that continuously discover fresh talents to be developed in the field of lounge entertainment. Be trained by Romy San Mateo, a well-known musical director in the 70's who handled the shows of the superstar Nora Aunor. Aside from honing your musical skills, Garrie Trinidad handles consultancy on personality development. With proper training in performing and good image packaging, Rhythm production assures you of a lucrative career in lounge entertainment. and if you really have the talent, you might be asked to perform immediately at Stone House Star Tavern, the production's regular venue aside from different hotels. Rhythm production is managed by the dynamic duo of Garrie Trinidad and Romy San Mateo. Its office is located at the Stone House Star Tavern at 1315 E. Rodriguez Ave. Quezon City, tel. no. 724-7551.

Demeter's Realm for your wedding needs

DEMETER'S Realm Flowers & Crafts offers fresh flowers for personal and business needs. The shop specializes in floral arrangements for weddings, birthdays, anniversaries, corporate events and other special celebrations. Demeter's Realm also offers one-of-a-kind crafts and gift items. It offers handmade papers and products, candles and holders, baskets, gift boxes, gift wrappers and dried flowers. Demeter's Realm also makes handy notepads and greeting cards for all occasions. Feel free to drop by Demeter's Realm Flowers & Crafts at #1A Holy Spirit Drive cor. Paraluman St. Isidora Hills, Diliman, Quezon City. You may also call at 9526159 and look for Kristine Muñoz for more details, or email demeters_realm@yahoo.com

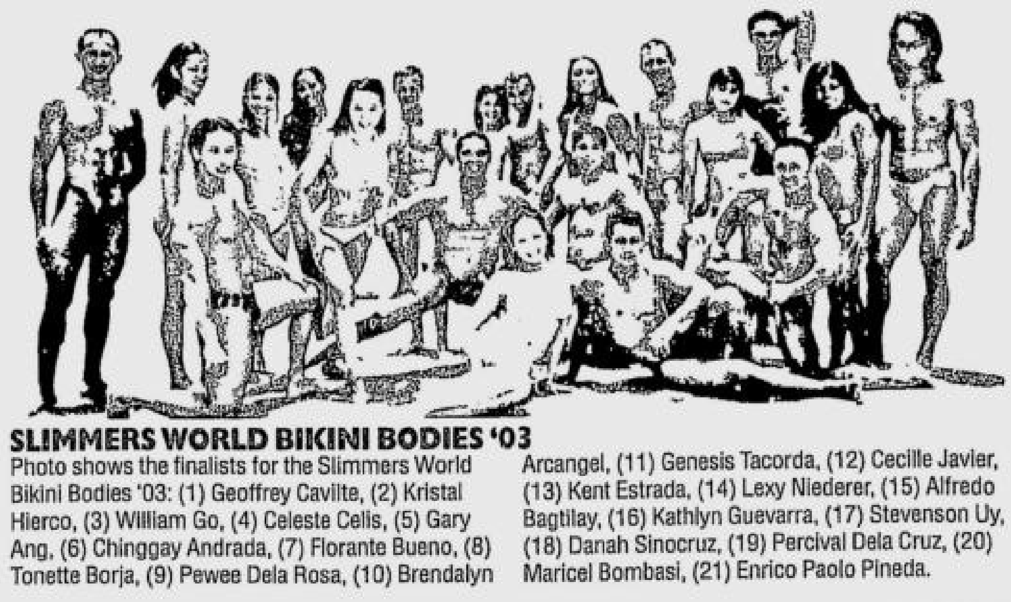
Streetlife Remix summer-ender party

THE FINAL days of summer belong to Streetlife Remix as it throws a wild, week-long party from May 26 to May 31 highlighted by an 80's themed affair and a daring men's and women's night hosted by Shaan Bermudez. The celebration goes full throttle on May 28, as Streetlife in cooperation with Cosmopolitan Magazine launches its Ladies Night Wednesdays. Watch out as sizzling host, Shaan coaxes out the tigress in every woman with provocative games and overflowing perks and prizes. One lucky lady will also get a chance to be Cosmo's "Fun and Fearless Female of the Night" and a place at the Streetlife Gallery. On May 29, the Men's Night Thursday will be launched, with Shaan treating the male species to one hot evening of naughty games, treats and perks. Daring souls can win fabulous prizes from Vive Cuervo, but the boldest of 'em all shall be hailed as the "He-Man of the Night." Streetlife Remix crowd-drawers Big Nite Out and Urban Factory take the weekend to even louder heights on Friday before E-merge and Kaktooz close out the week-long party with their own brand of electric entertainment. For more on Streetlife, check out Streetlife Remix@Planetgimmick.com.

ProductFILES

Head Professional hair salon opens

PHOTO shows the reception area of Head Professional, a new hair salon at the 2nd floor, Unit 213 and 214 of the AD Center Square, E. Rodriguez Ave. cor. Evangelista St. Santolan, Pasig City. The new salon, a new venture of Ben Matibag, a successful and well-known personality in the hairdressing business, is managed by sister-partners Lilli Ann Gomez and Raquel Martinez. They offer a complete line of treatments and services for both men and women and for their inaugural promo, they will provide discounts of up to 30 percent from opening date up to the end of July. For inquiries, call 647-3546.



SLIMMERS WORLD BIKINI BODIES '03
Photo shows the finalists for the Slimmers World Bikini Bodies '03: (1) Geoffrey Cavilte, (2) Kristal Hierco, (3) William Go, (4) Celeste Celis, (5) Gary Ang, (6) Chinggay Andrada, (7) Florante Bueno, (8) Tonette Borja, (9) Pewee Dela Rosa, (10) Brendalyn Arcangel, (11) Genesis Tacorda, (12) Cecille Javier, (13) Kent Estrada, (14) Lexy Niederer, (15) Alfredo Bagtilay, (16) Kathlyn Guevarra, (17) Stevenson Uy, (18) Danah Sinocruz, (19) Percival Dela Cruz, (20) Maricel Bombasi, (21) Enrico Paolo Pineda.

AIRFREIGHT 2100 WORKFORCE FLU IMMUNIZATION
Airfreight 2100 Inc. in partnership with Aventis Pasteur, the world leader in vaccines, recently conducted its annual flu vaccination program among its entire workforce including the PBA Express basketball team. Photo shows Airfreight 2100 president and PBA Express team manager Angelito Alvarez with his team during the vaccination.

REAL ESTATE

E-mail: pr_real_estate@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

P18-B 'ROAD TO RECOVERY'

95-km highway to attract more investors

By Tessa R. Salazar

SUBIC
stephB.

THE PHILIPPINES can play a pivotal part in the huge volume of Internet purchase deliveries. How? A 94.5-km highway linking the former Clark air base and Subic naval base seems to be the clear answer.

The P18-billion Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway project would enable vehicles for only 30 minutes to cross from Subic to Clark, and vice versa, a trip that originally takes two hours. The benefits of the expressway will also trickle to other ecozones in Central Luzon: the Special Economic Zone in Zambales and the Luisita Industrial Park in Tarlac.

The construction of the expressway will also attract more locators to the area surrounding the Subic-Clark Tarlac Expressway. The highway is expected to open new areas for development and a new land for other industrial development.

"Between Subic and Clark, there's a vast tract of land that's of no use right now," explains Rex Antonio Chan, project leader for the expressway and Bases Conversion Development Authority vice president for operations. He added that the crop being planted on those areas is sugarcane, which takes 10 months before harvest.

For Internet goods

Chan explained that many goods ordered via the Internet come from China. Goods from China are still brought to the United States to be distributed. Businesses see the Philippines' Subic-Clark to be strategic storage ports and take-off points of Internet goods, among others. A highway connecting the two ecozones can even make it easier and faster for the goods to be stored and delivered.

The expressway will have a design speed of 120 km/hr. It will be 60-m wide (wider than Edsa, which has 40 meters). It will have a four-lane divided highway (two lanes each way). But it will have enough space to expand to 16 lanes (eight lanes each). Edsa has six lanes each.

Chan said that all curvatures and elevations were carefully considered for a smoother ride for trucks carrying bulk of goods. The maximum slope to be done is only 3 percent.

Every kilometer will have a monitoring camera that will have 1-km radius to monitor stalled trucks or overspeeding vehicles. There would be 24-hour laser radar guidance to monitor speed of vehicles. Apprehensions will take place at the tollgates.

The project has received a special yen loan from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation via the Philippine government and the BCDA. Part of the contract states that only Japanese contractors will be able to bid. The subcontracting, however, will be allowed for Filipino contractors. Fifty percent of the project will have to be Japanese content. Equipment, steel, toll facilities and main components will come from Japan.

The most viable alternative

But why link Subic to Clark, and not involve the Manila ports? For one, Subic has a deeper port than Manila Bay, and thus can accommodate more goods and heavier ships. Secondly, the Manila ports have become too crowded, making the movement of goods there increasingly difficult. And if Philippine enterprises transshipped their goods through Singapore, Hong Kong or Taipei instead, the move would prove more costly and extend turnaround time. Subic Bay, then, becomes the only viable alternative.

The goods in Subic can, in turn, be transported to Clark, home to the country's biggest airport specializing in cargo and airfreight. Clark is also where reliable carriers UPS and DHL are based, thereby giving this ecozone the huge potential to become the storage caretaker of goods from all over the world.

As more people around the world discover the efficiencies of ordering via the Internet, the demand for break-bulk-cum-consolidation services at strategically located airports would grow by leaps and bounds. Clark, thus, is ideally situated to become a regional logistics center, like the one that has emerged in Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

The project is divided into two packages, the first package completes 50.5 km, the second package 44 km.

The major river bridge structures include the Pasig-Potrero River Bridge, Dinalupihan Viaduct, Caulaman River Bridge, Porac River Bridge and Gumain River Bridge. The expressway structures include five interchanges, 27 other bridges, 76 culverts, two overpasses and 20 underpasses.

The second package would have the Sacobia-Bamban River Bridge as the major bridge structure. It would feature 9 interchanges, eight other bridges, 98 culverts, 12 overpasses and 10 underpasses.

The target date for the start of construction for package 1 is in March 2004, and for package 2 in November this year. The design for the highway is now 80 percent complete, while the right-of-way acquisition is 90 percent complete.

Package 1 (Subic to Clark route) consumes all of 375 hectares—the 50.5-km expressway takes up 305 hectares, its five interchanges will eat 50 hectares and its service or business areas will acquire 20 hectares.

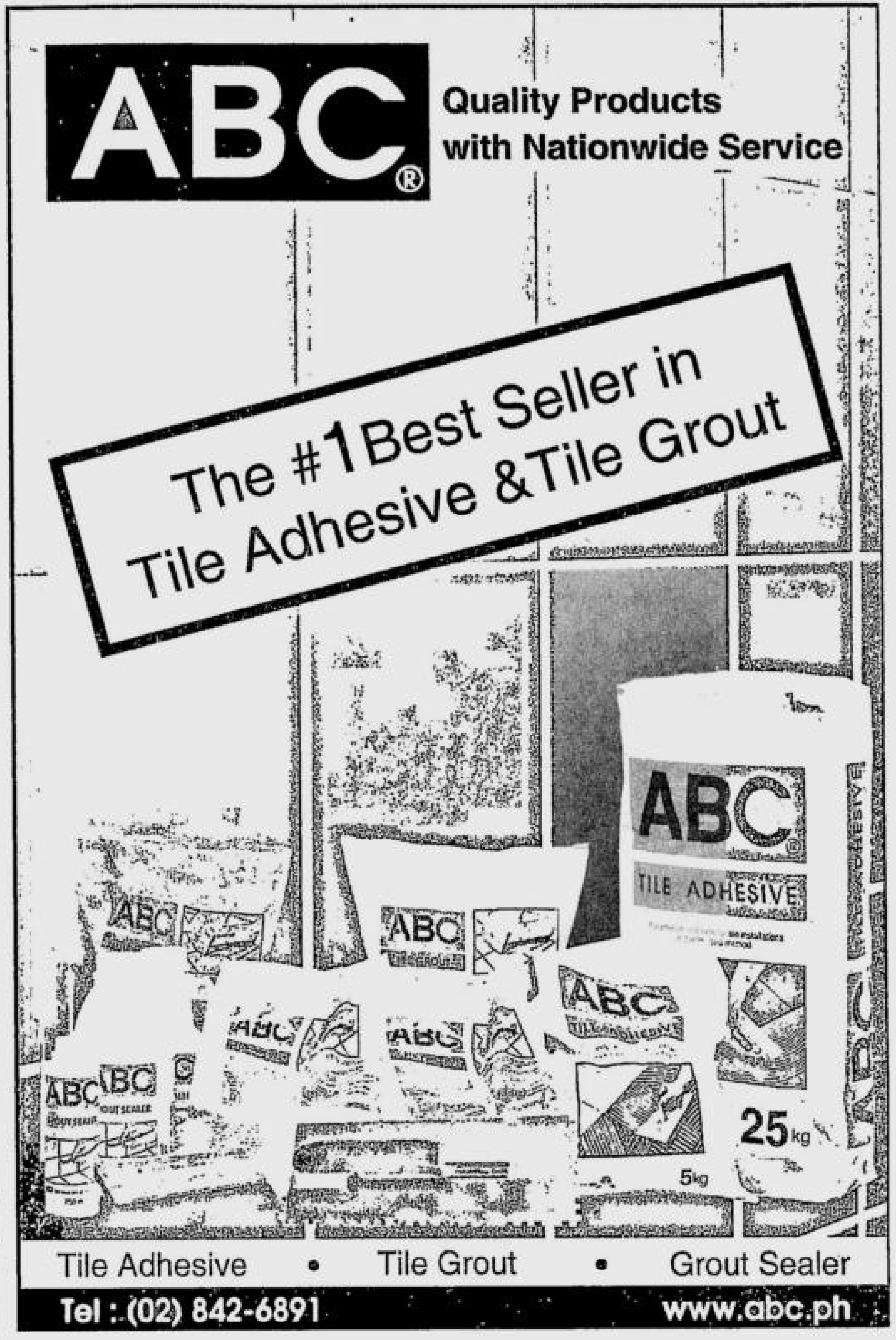
The total area to be acquired by Package 2 (Clark to Tarlac route) is 365 hectares. Its 44.4-km expressway covers 255 hectares, its nine interchanges would cover 90 hectares and its service or business areas 20 hectares.

The provinces between Subic and Clark—Tarlac, Pampanga, Bataan and Zambales—are expected to benefit from the highway.

There will be several segments for the highway construction. The target completion of the first segment of the highway, for instance, is the entry to Clark from the North Expressway. This will be opened before President Macapa-

95-KM/ B9

> Clark is ideally situated to become a regional logistics center, like the one that has emerged in Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan



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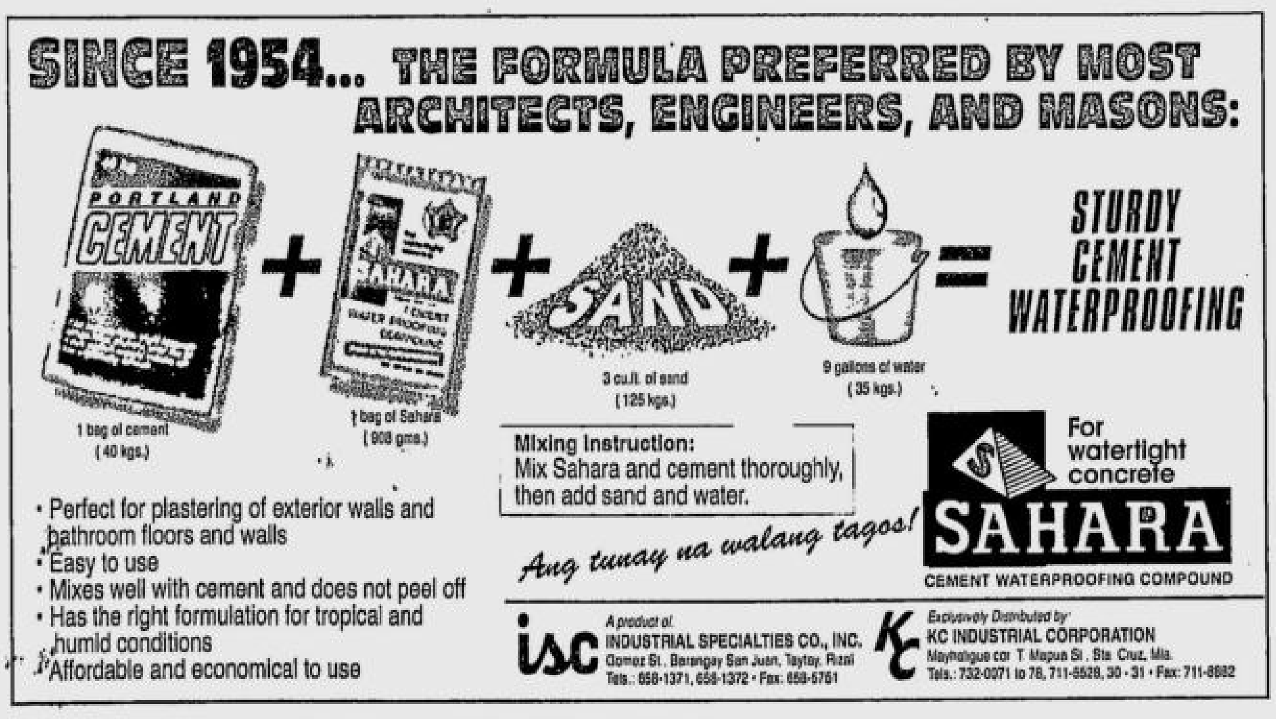

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Financing your dream home

By Alexis A. Acacio, Ph.D.

(Last of 2 parts)

BUILDING DREAMS

BORROWING from a lender to finance your home is not just proving that you have the character, capacity to pay and credit rating required. A real estate mortgage is a secured loan so a collateral is needed. The collateral that you are offering to mortgage will have to be checked and assessed by the lender and will affect and influence the maximum amount you can borrow.

Documents about the collateral

Lenders would require detailed information on the property being presented as collateral for a loan. Documents to be submitted to the bank include:

- **Title and Tax Declaration**—The title and tax declaration is a proof of ownership of the property you are offering as collateral. The lender will check the authenticity of the title with the Registry of Deeds. Liens and encumbrances against the property are annotated in the title.
- **Lot Plan and Location Plan**—The geodetic engineer surveys the lot and places the monuments that define the boundaries. The lot plán is a diagram showing the orientation, dimension and shape of the lot.
- **Detailed Plans and Specifications**—If you are applying for a construction loan, the detailed plans and specifications are very important for the lender in order to assess the floor area and finishes of the house you intend to build.
- **Cost Estimates**—The bank representative verifies the estimate of the costs. This is gradually checked as the construction work progresses.
- **Bill of Materials**—This is a list of all the types and quantities of materials that are to be used for the project.

The appraisal process

Banks appraise the property either through their own personnel or through a separate appraisal company. There are different methods on how to value your real estate property. Based on the lending policies of the bank, there is a maximum value of loan that can be taken out based on the appraised value of the property.

Appraisal of real estate is used in many ways. These include:

- **Purchase and Sale of Real Property**—When a property is being bought or sold, appraising its fair market value would give an indication on how much it would be traded in the open market.
- **Obtaining Financing**—In obtaining a loan from a lender, the property being tied up as a collateral is appraised based on the lending policies of the lender.
- **Partition of Property**—When a property is being divided, the appraisal value is used to ensure partitioning of land among its beneficiaries.
- **Expropriation**—When the government is expropriating a piece of land, the appraisal process would determine a fair amount on how much the government should pay the landowner of the property being expropriated.

Approaches to value

In arriving at a fair market value for a property, there are many approaches in the appraisal process. The most common ones include:

- **Market Data Approach**—The property is compared with other properties and its value is assessed based on the value of comparable properties. It is based on the principle of substitution and that no knowledgeable buyer will pay more than what it will cost him or her an equally desirable substitute property.

Basis for comparison includes price information from classified ads, recent sales and from brokers. In comparing a property with another, adjustments in value are done. In a specific area or subdivision for example, a corner lot may be more expensive by 10 to 15 percent over an inner lot since the perspective of the house to be constructed will be better and the owner has two sides of access.

- **Replacement Cost Approach**—The cost of building a similar property is calculated. The concept of having a "replacement" for the property is analyzed. The appraiser is well versed with the latest prices of materials and labor so that an accurate value of reproducing the structure or property is established. Most of the time, persons doing the appraisal are trained and educated in architecture or engineering.

In the appraisal of a property based on the replacement value method, the objective is simply to calculate the cost of reproducing the structure. If the structure being replaced is not new, then the appropriate depreciation is incorporated. Depreciation of property is caused by the usual wear and tear due to use or a decrease in functionality or use of the property due to the design layout itself or due to external factors.

- **Income Value**—The income that can be derived from a real estate investment is assessed and compared with the financial objectives of the investor. The objective of the investor is to receive a financial return on the land and on the improvements.

The appraiser may choose to use one or a combination of these approaches when coming up with a valuation of the property to be used as collateral. If you want your property appraised, it is best to ask for the services of a professional appraiser of your choice.

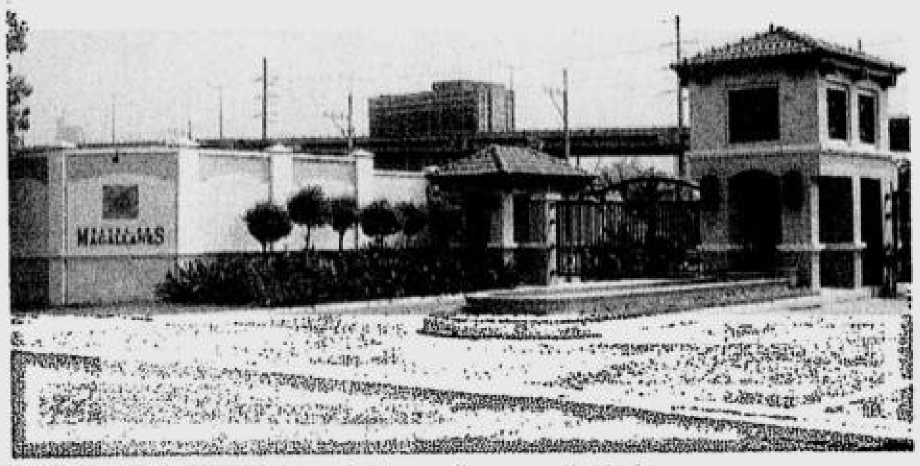
Different points of view

Value in use (Subjective Value) is concerned with values within the property itself. This is the value that concerns the owner. A property may have sentimental value to the owner, which is very difficult to quantify and would not concern the lender at all. Value in exchange (Objective Value) is concerned with forces outside of the property. This is concerned with the value of the property to others and is what the lender will look at.

In a mortgage situation, the lender and the borrower would want to protect their own interests. A borrower's objective is different from that of a lender. A borrower would want to get the most value from his or her property and a lender has the ultimate objective of making money in the transaction. The lender has risks in lending money so a financial return in terms of interest payments should compensate for taking the risk. The borrower on the other hand has a big responsibility of making the required payments on time to avoid foreclosure.

If you are thinking of borrowing to finance your home, it is best that you are honest about what you need, what you want and what you can afford.

(Alexis A. Acacio is an associate professor of civil engineering at the University of the Philippines. For comments and advice you may reach him at aaacacio@pacific.net.ph.)



PASEO de Magallanes has retained a small-community feel.

Strong pent-up demand for prime Makati lots

FOLLOWING record take-up rates of its first phase in 2001, the final phase of Paseo de Magallanes is expected to likewise move briskly when it is launched soon. The last phase of this 7.4-hectare development, less than 2 kilometers to the country's premiere business district, will have a limited number of properties: 14 residential and six commercial lots only.

Industry observers attribute the phenomenal performance of Paseo de Magallanes to its proximity to the Makati business district in addition to its small-community feel. In April 2001 at the height of political instability, the Ayala Land project moved 48 residential lots within days. Despite pervading uncertainty that year, the rest of the 22 commercial lots were sold within the next few months.

Strong pent-up demand

According to Ayala Land project manager Bobby O. Dy, there is a strong pent-up demand for prime residential lots in Makati. The waiting list for more residential property in the community is long and Paseo de Magallanes lots remain scarce in the secondary property market.

Moreover, it is highly unlikely that similar developments will become available in the environs of the business district. "Ayala Land no longer has properties like this in its Makati land bank," he said.

A number of buyers of the first phase were residents of Magallanes Village who have grown with the community. "They appreciate that Paseo de Magallanes will allow them or their children to live close to the business district but at the same time have the comforts of a home in the suburbs." This is according to Tristan dela Rosa, senior vice president and concurrently heading the Sales and Marketing Services Group and the Land and Community Development Group.

New phase

In the new phase as in the initial one, residential lots will range from 359 to 436 sq. m, a comfortable size which would allow a home with three to four bedrooms, a lanai or den for entertaining and even a small pool.

Moreover, the Paseo de Magallanes community benefits from new Ayala Land innovations. The utilities in the property will all be underground, which means less chances of service interruptions at the height of typhoons or as tall vehicles like moving vans and garbage trucks move through the streets.

The community has also been planned by Ayala Land to retain its intimate scale. "We do not want to replicate in Magallanes any of our large-scale developments in the business district. We wanted Magallanes to remain a place where neighbors know each other," Dela Rosa said.

Stores and restaurants

This early, Paseo de Magallanes already has a number of restaurants, a coffee bar, grocery and other convenience retail establishments to service the community. More stores and restaurants are expected in the low-rise buildings, which will be constructed by individual owners in the commercial zone.

Paseo de Magallanes is adjacent to Magallanes Village, one of six Makati subdivisions developed by Ayala Land Inc. in the last five decades. Property owners in these villages have been rewarded by the continued and sustained appreciation of their lots through the years.

Like the rest of these Makati communities, Paseo de Magallanes is expected to remain among the primest pieces of property in the country because of its proximity to the premiere business district of Makati which Ayala Land continues to actively manage through various organizations of lot owners.

'Serving all sectors of society' theme of Moldex 7th year fest

DOING its share in providing homes to families in all sectors of Philippine society was the theme of the seventh anniversary celebration of Moldex Realty Marketing Inc., the exclusive marketing company of Moldex Land Inc. and Moldex Realty Inc.

"Our mission is to serve Filipinos from all walks of life—from homeless families who need decent houses, to executives and professionals who need bigger homes for their growing families and new lifestyles, and businessmen who are in search for long-term and profitable investments," says MRMI president Editha L. Manansala.

Various projects

In a span of seven years, the MRMI has marketed house-and-lot packages as well as residential lots in its various projects in Metro Manila, Cavite, Laguna, Rizal, Pampanga and Bulacan.

Heritage Homes Meycauayan in Bulacan and Heritage Homes Trece Martires in Cavite have row houses, townhouses, duplexes and single-detached units for low-income groups that include soldiers, policemen, teachers, workers and employees. Lot areas in these two subdivisions range from 42 to 132 square meters.

Tagaytay Southridge Villas, situated in one of the country's most scenic spots, has town-homes that are designed for professionals, retirees and businessmen.

On Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City, Moldex boasts of the Metrogate Villas, a collection of two-story, single-detached homes of contemporary European design.

A flagship project is 1322 Roxas Blvd., a 57-story condominium building that is designed to be a prestige and power address for success-oriented individuals and business entities. Expected to be an architectural landmark in Metro Manila, 1322's unique facet is its curtain wall that gives suite owners a spectacular view of the famous sunset at Manila Bay.

Residential lots

Residential lots are available at the MRMI's north residential projects, namely Metrovilla Center (Valenzuela City), Metrogate Angeles (Angeles City), Metroview Ridge Estates (Antipolo City), Metrogate San Jose, Metrogate Meycauayan 2, and Metrogate Complex (Meycauayan, Bulacan).

The MRMI's south projects also offer prime residential lots. These are Tagaytay Southridge Estates, Metrogate Tagaytay Estates, Metrogate Dasmariñas Estates, Metrogate Silang Estates, Metrogate Indang, Metrogate Trece Martires, Metrogate Dasmariñas, Metrogate Sta. Rosa, and Villa Caceres Sta. Rosa in Laguna.

Customer value enhancement

The MRMI has a unique customer value enhancement program that is refined over time to ensure customer satisfaction and delight.

Among the buyer's incentive packages are the Perfect Home Service Package that is designed to help buyers find the financing and homebuilding or refurbishing services that they need; and Buyer's Plus where customers receive rewards for endorsing Moldex projects to other home buyers.

The MRMI has its offices at the third floor of Golden Bay Hotel, 247 Padre Faura St. corner Roxas Boulevard, Ermita, Manila, Tel. Nos. 536-0082 and 522-7777.

COUNTRY CLUB TO RISE SOON
La Finca Farm and Country Resort in Lipa City, Batangas, recently signed an agreement with Moondragon Construction Inc. for the construction of its country club. From left are La Finca resident engineer David Resuma, corporate counsel Anselmo Sinjian III and CEO Mario Oreta, Moondragon Construction president William Que and corporate counsels Joji Zafra and Leonardo Aguilar.

The Residences offers high life

AYALA Land Inc., the country's most respected developer, announces the next level in the evolution of Greenbelt: The Residences at Greenbelt.

Taking off on the luxurious and exclusive Residences apartments above Greenbelt 2, Laguna Tower, the first of three towers in The Residences at Greenbelt, will take upscale living up into the sky with forty-eight stories of elegant and expansive living spaces.

To grace the skyline

Rising on a block of land—bounded by Arnaiz Avenue (Pasay Road), Greenbelt Drive, Esperanza Drive and Paseo de Roxas—The Residences at Greenbelt will grace the skyline of the Makati central business district and further define Ayala Center and Greenbelt as the ultimate urban address.

Not only a posh address, the ground level of The Residences at Greenbelt will boast of high-end dining and shopping for residents and visitors. It will be linked to the rest of Ayala Center and the rest of the MCBD by the clever and efficient walkway system, the smart way of rising above the traffic woes and grime of the street. The clean, well-lit walkways offer a clever and healthy way of getting to work, play and shopping, without ever setting foot on the street.

Hospitable elegance

The Residences at Greenbelt will bear the warm, verdant, hospitable elegance that sets the area apart from other Greenbelt sites. Green gardens, flowing fountains and chic designs unite the residential development with the rest of Greenbelt. Residents will be able to fully express the lifestyle of the "Greenbelter," enjoying fine dining in Greenbelt 2; shopping and cinema in Greenbelt 3; the future delights of Greenbelt 4; the bargain delights of Greenbelt 1; and, of course, café living in Greenbelt 3's patio, where people watching is the official pastime.

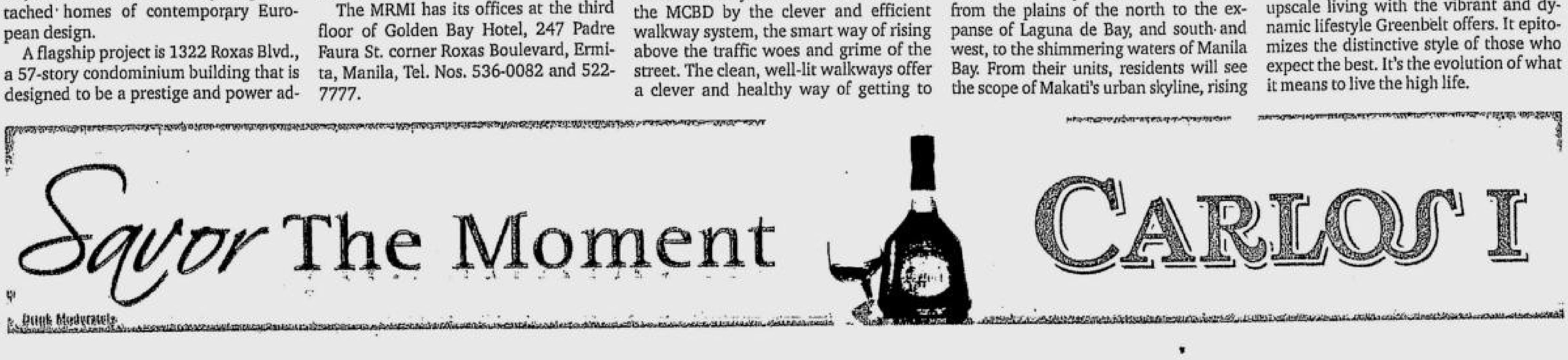
Within The Residences at Greenbelt, Ayala Land will take metropolitan living to new heights. Laguna Tower offers two- and three-bedroom homes from 118 to more than 220 square meters in area, in single-level flats and two-story units. Its resplendent height will proffer the widest views of the city and the countryside, from the plains of the north to the expanse of Laguna de Bay, and south and west, to the shimmering waters of Manila Bay. From their units, residents will see the scope of Makati's urban skyline, rising from parks like emeralds in stone: Legaspi Park; Urdaneta, San Lorenzo; and, at their feet, their own garden, Greenbelt park itself. From the podium of the building, the gleaming lights of the streets create an ever-changing panorama of activity residents can appreciate from a relaxing poolside chair.

Features, amenities

Each unit will offer features and amenities designed for comfortable urban living. Large, well-ventilated kitchens, full-size living rooms, dining rooms and even a maid's room, come standard. Many units come with balconies perfect for outdoor entertaining or simply taking in the view.

Units in The Residences at Greenbelt Laguna Tower come with two parking spaces. As in the Residences apartments above Greenbelt 2, access to the residential areas of the development will be private, secure and discreet. Twenty-four hour security maximizes peace of mind.

The Residences at Greenbelt unites upscale living with the vibrant and dynamic lifestyle Greenbelt offers. It epitomizes the distinctive style of those who expect the best. It's the evolution of what it means to live the high life.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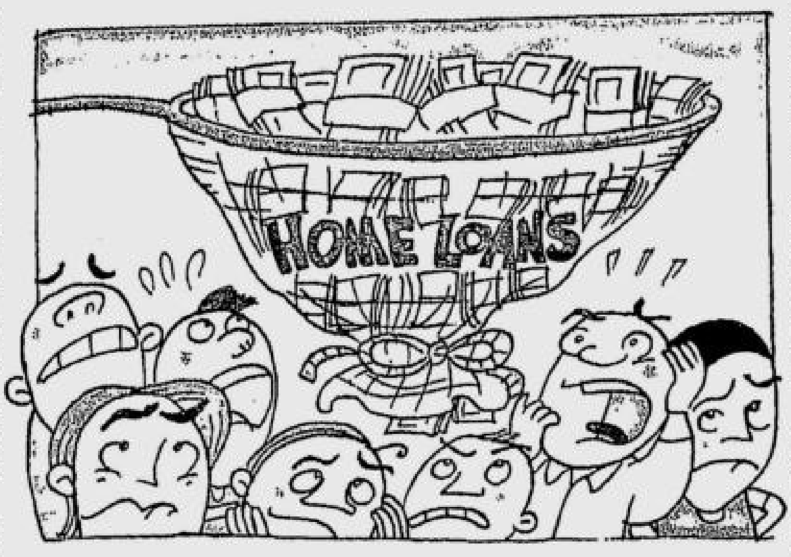
Release of P728M in home loans delayed

FAILURE by the homeowners' associations of informal settler and their originators to comply with the delivery to the National Home Mortgage Finance Corp. of the required loan and mortgage documentary requirements has delayed the release of some P728-million in housing loan assistance during the last six months.

This is according to lawyer Angelico T. Salud, NHMFC president, in a forum with nongovernment organizations (NGOs) participating as accredited loan originators under its community mortgage program (CMP).



Had the requirements been met, the unreleased loan amount otherwise would have assisted an additional 24,292 informal settlers in financing land and housing acquisition during the period, Salud said.

Balance

The amount represents the balance of the mortgage value of CMP projects in the loan processing pipeline already granted funding commitment lines as of Sept. 30 last year, but those loan documents remained uncompleted or undelivered to date, he cited.

This loan inventory originally stood at P979.7 million as of Sept. 30 this year, less P178.39 millions in loan proceeds released during the last quarter of that year plus the P72.5 million released during the first three months of 2003.

Had the loan documentation for these pending CMP projects sites been completed, it would have raised to a record level of P163 million the average monthly releases during the six-month period mentioned.

Loan requirement

"It is in compliance with its fiduciary obligations and prudent handling of public funds that the NHMFC demands minimal loan requirement from informal-settlers borrowers, so as to assure the integrity, enforceability and recovery of CMP loans to enable other homeless urban poor families to avail themselves also of this loan benefit," Salud pointed out.

To facilitate loan availments, the NHMFC has reduced the CMP loan documentary requirements from 56 to 18 and is also currently reviewing the loan processing system, in compliance with the policy and program initiatives of Housing Secretary Michael T. Defensor, he added.

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Hirsch Bedner to design Eastwood Excelsior lobby

PREMIER urban developer Megaworld Corp. has tapped award-winning Hirsch Bedner Associates (HBA) to design the lobby of The Eastwood Excelsior twin towers in Eastwood City, a mixed-use urban complex in Quezon City.

The HBA is considered the world's foremost hospitality interior design firm, and its systems, specifications and methods of documentation are acknowledged as the international industry standard. Since its founding in 1964, it has undertaken various projects in strategic locations around the world, including Los Angeles, Atlanta, Hong Kong, London, San Francisco, Singapore, Milan, Dubai and Manila.

HBA's international clientele includes the most prominent names in the hotel industry such as the Hilton, Hyatt, Inter-Continental, Mandarin Oriental, Marriot, Pan Pacific, Peninsula, Regent/Four Seasons, Ritz-Cariton, Rosewood, Sheraton, Swissotel, Sun International, Taj and Westin.

In the Philippines, its projects include the Manila Diamond Hotel, the Makati Shangri-La Hotel and Pan Pacific Manila.

Interior designer

Aside from hotels, HBA has designed the interiors of hundreds of restaurants, spas, cruise ships, casinos and resorts. Its current projects include the Grande Lakes Resort, the Royal Pacific Resort and Conference Center and the Inter-Continental Hotel Miami in Florida, the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in New York, the Arrays Center in Kuwait, the M.O.B. (Custom Millwork & Furniture) in Turkey and the Marriot Tbilisi in the Republic of Georgia.

Before The Eastwood Excelsior, the HBA has designed the lobbies of other Megaworld projects, including One and Two Lafayette Square.

Luxury residential address

The Eastwood Excelsior is a luxury residential address that features a combination of classic and contemporary architecture. Scheduled for completion and turnover by the third quarter of 2005, it offers executive studio units and one- to three-bedroom suites in its 30-story Tower 1 and 34-story Tower 2.

Its deluxe amenities include a grand entrance lobby, lap and wading pools with a sun deck and changing rooms, a laundromat, fitness center, retail shops at the ground level and podium-level parking.

GMA VIEWS GATEWAY MALL MODEL
President Macapagal-Arroyo, Jorge L. Araneta and Judy A. Roxas inspect an architectural model of Araneta Center's Gateway Mall. The five-level shopping mall is the first major leg of the Araneta Center redevelopment plan, which aims to connect the prime commercial districts in Quezon City. It will soon rise at teh corner of Aurora Boulevard and Edsa.

Making your condo dream come true with GA Towers

IF OWNING a condominium was just a distant dream for you, now it can become a reality, thanks to real estate entrepreneurs like Delfin Lee, president of Globe Asiatique Realty Holdings Corp., the developer of GA Towers and the government's shelter financing arm, Pag-Ibig Fund.

GA Towers, soon to rise on Edsa, Mandaluyong City, near the Boni MRT station, is a 30-story, 600-unit residential condominium project. It is available especially to middle-income earners through a financing arrangement with Pag-Ibig Fund, making equity payment and balance amortization affordable.

Whether a prospective owner opts for a one-, two- or three-bedroom unit, he can pay the no-down payment 20-percent equity in 36 monthly installments at zero interest, with the remaining 80-percent balance through a guaranteed loan with Pag-Ibig, for a maximum term of 20 years.

Aside from the affordable payment scheme, GA Towers offers residents the comforts of a home like other condominiums. For instance, each unit has two toilets and bathrooms, kitchen, dining and living areas, plus a loft.

The second floor has likewise been designed for amenities like a swimming pool, gym and spa, a food and reception lobby. There is also ample space for parking in the basement.

Only a few units are available for negotiation, call up Jona Vergara at 0917-4140845 for assistance.

95-km highway. . .

From page B7

gal-Arroyo leaves office in June 2004.

Completion is expected in June 2006. Segmental openings are expected before that.

Local impact

The most expensive component of agricultural production is postharvest. With the creation of roads and storage facilities, the postproduction costs can be lessened.

The biggest tract of arable land in Luzon is the Central Luzon plain, the rice granary of the Philippines. The Central Plain's rice produce can sufficiently feed the entire Philippine population. Furthermore, Central Luzon is also a vegetable-producing area. However, given vegetables' short shelf life, vegetables from this area don't get distributed in time. Mindanao has to import its vegetables from Malaysia and Indonesia.

Refrigeration components in Clark can be stationed for these vegetables. Coupled with the Subic-Clark-Tarlac expressway, turnaround time for vegetable deliveries can be speedier. It would now even be possible to produce for Visayas and Mindanao.

The Subic Clark Alliance Development Corp. is a joint venture corporation to be formed by the Bases Conversion and Development Authority, Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority and the Clark Development Corp.

Handy tools fit for the handyman

IF you've been wanting to fix the broken furniture in your home but don't have tools to do so? Be your own handyman and visit Robinsons Handyman and Handyman's Do It Best home improvement centers.

There is a wide selection of tools and gadgets to choose from. Among these are hammers, screw drivers, hooks, wood glues, varnish and brushes.

If you want to spruce up your garden. Summer is the time to do it. Plant a tree or start your own flower garden.

Handyman offers flower seeds, Do-It-Best garden hose, Diamond Grip work and garden gloves, Garden Greenery 3-piece garden tools set from Handyman. Available at special discounts from April 25 to May 29 are also outdoor lamp posts, lawn mowers and hedge shears. For home accents, check out decorative items like table lamps, center tables, carpets and wallpapers that you can find at Handyman.

Robinsons Handyman and Handyman's Do It Best carry a wide array of home improvement products at the best prices. They have 35 stores nationwide in all Robinsons Malls, Waltermart stores and other leading shopping centers.

Soon to open are branches at Robinsons Place Lipa; Dasmariñas, Cavite; and Angeles and Waltermart in Plaridel, Bulacan.

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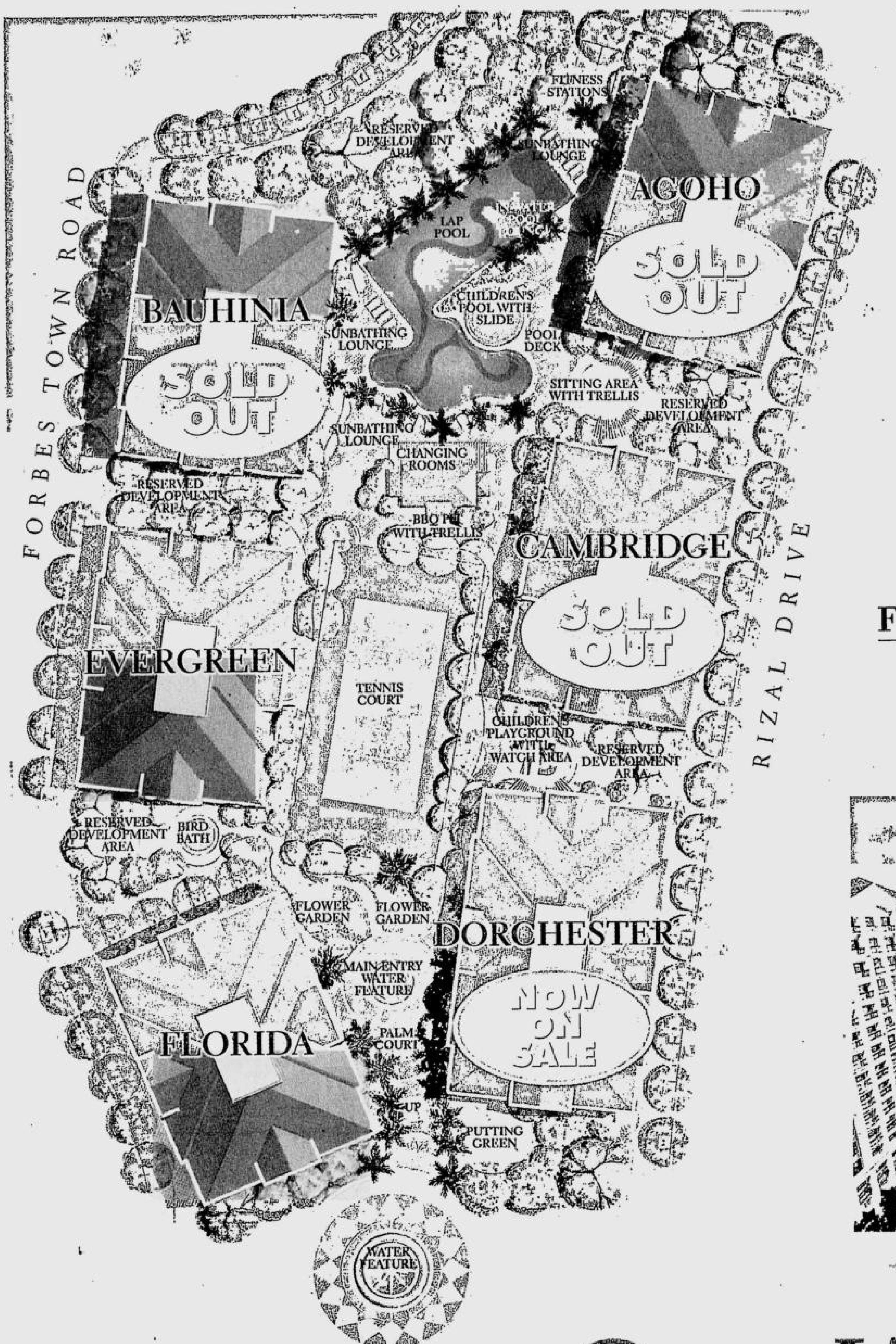
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AGOHO
SOLD OUT
LAP POOL
INFANT POOL
BAUHINIA
SOLD OUT
CHILDREN'S POOL WITH SLIDE
SUNBATHING LOUNGE
POOL DECK
SITTING AREA WITH TRELLIS
RESERVED DEVELOPMENT AREA
SUNBATHING LOUNGE
CHANGING ROOMS
RESERVED DEVELOPMENT AREA
BBQ PIT WITH TRELLIS
CAMBRIDGE
SOLD OUT
EVERGREEN
TENNIS COURT
CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND WITH WATCH AREA
RESERVED DEVELOPMENT AREA
RESERVED DEVELOPMENT AREA
BIRD BATH
FLOWER GARDEN
FLOWER GARDEN
DORCHESTER
MAIN ENTRY WATER FEATURE
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FLORIDA
PALM COURT
PUTTING GREEN
WATER FEATURE

FORBESWOOD HEIGHTS

LUXURY GARDEN RESIDENCES

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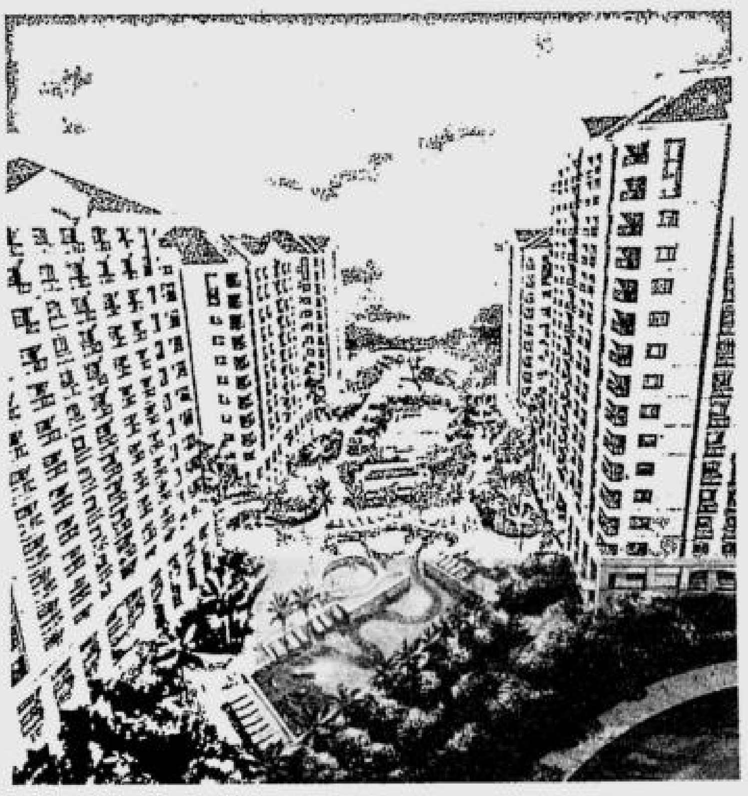

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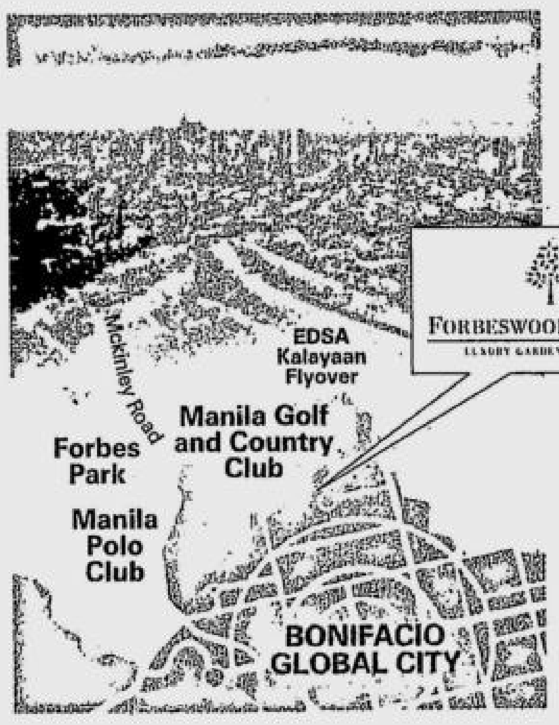
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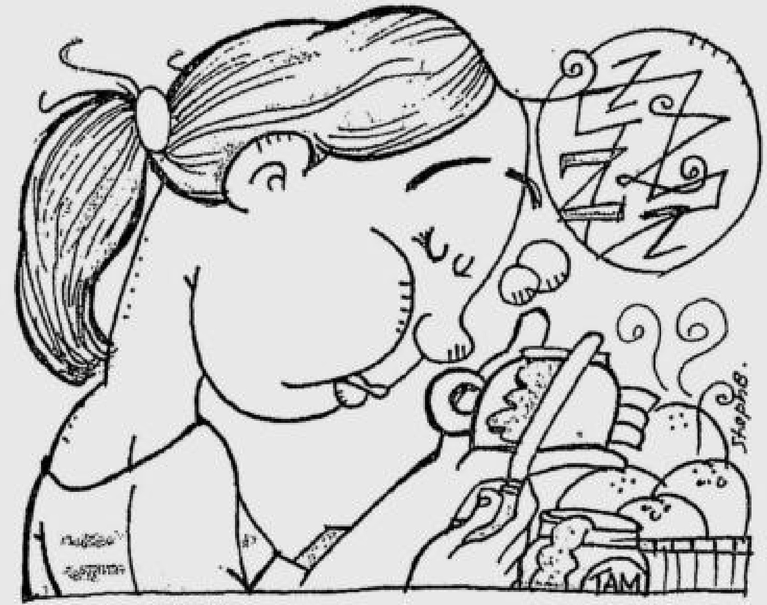
How to get a good night's sleep



ILLUSTRATIONS: STEPH BRAVO

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

"EARLY to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise." Whoever actually coined that saying was closer to the truth than he ever knew (contrary to popular belief, Benjamin Franklin was not the author). Sleep is one of the most important factors in achieving good health. Not only does the lack of it affect mental and physical performance, lower immunity, make us more prone to gain weight, and put us in a foul mood. Research indicates lack of sleep may also play a role in depression, heart disease, and type-2 diabetes.

Insomnia is defined as having one of the following symptoms: Difficulty falling asleep, waking up often during the night, waking up too early in the morning and being unable to go back to sleep, or waking up in the morning feeling tired.

Transient insomnia lasts only for a day or two. It can be caused by sleeping in an unfamiliar bed when you travel, by the anticipation of an exciting or stressful event the next day, or by having a cough that keeps you up.

Short-term insomnia can range from a few nights to a few weeks usually because of a worrying problem or a temporary situation like waking up several times to feed a young baby. When the problem or situation is resolved, insomnia disappears and normal sleep patterns return.

Chronic insomnia can last for months or years. It needs medical and/or psychiatric help and can be a symptom of another health condition.

While not seemingly as serious as full-blown insomnia, "chronic sleep debt" or constant sleep deprivation of an hour or two daily can have a negative long-term effect on our health. This condition is usually due to what is called poor sleep hygiene or an unhealthy sleeping environment. Here are tips from the National Sleep Foundation, The Better Sleep Council and other

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Partnering with you to find new solutions
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THE TWO-DAY Summer Camp had talks and simulated demonstrations of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), first aid and rescue operations.

Emergency expo and summer camp help strengthen families

TRAINING to handle emergency and catastrophic situations. First-aid lessons. Bomb detection skills introduction. A camp for future law enforcement officers? Guess again. It was a two-day Emergency Expo and Family Summer Camp sponsored by ABS-CBN's AM radio station dzMM and pharmaceutical firm Eli Lilly Philippines.

"There are very few opportunities for families to get together and learn about crisis preparedness, that's why we have decided to put up this Summer Camp. I think every family has the welfare of the other family members always in mind, and we are just taking that concern a step further," said Angelo Palmones, dzMM special projects director and station manager.

This two-day Summer Camp, which is on its third year, was free of charge and was open to the first 100 families who registered. Talks and simulated demonstrations of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), first aid, rescue operations and bomb detection kept couples and their children busy over the weekend.

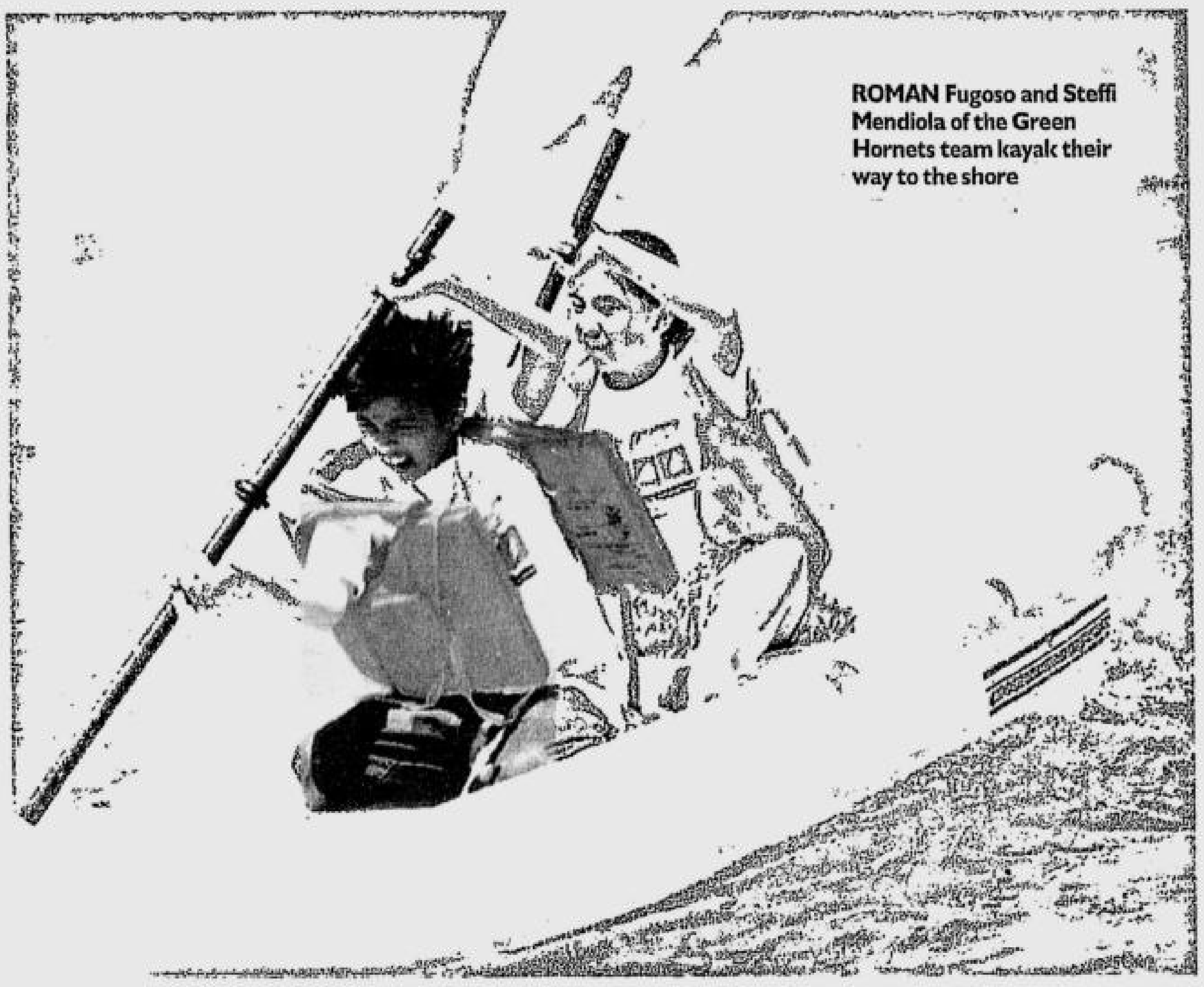
Parents took part in an obstacle-filled 1-km walkathon or participated in a "How well do you know your spouse?" contest.

Saturday evening was capped with the whole family watching "The Story of Us," a movie that highlighted the importance of a couple's relationship in keeping the family together.

Call 885-0001 local 110.

COUPLES participate in the walkathon.

ELI Lilly Philippines provides free medical check-ups for the participating families, including blood-pressure check and blood-sugar/diabetes test.



ROMAN Fugoso and Steffi Mendiola of the Green Hornets team kayak their way to the shore

Three-day camp for kids

COLEMAN recently organized a three-day outdoor camp to provide an alternative educational and recreational activity for youngsters.

Dubbed Camp Coleman, the outdoor event was held at the Montemar Beach Club in Bataan. Participating kids were divided into four teams: The Snipers, Cool Dragons, Broccoli with Chicken Tempura (or The Tempuras, named after its members' favorite dish), and the Green Hornets.

Each team was given a free hand to name its own group and choose its own leader, and was guided by well-trained camp counselors.

The first two days of camp were full of hands-on activities, lectures and demonstrations interspersed with team-building activities. For every successfully accomplished activity, a team earned certain points. This gave team members a sense of unity and motivated them to go through each activity as efficiently as they could, and to pay attention to the lectures.

The third day was reserved for the "Treasure Hunt," a culminating activity where each team had to work together to apply everything they had learned in the first two days to hunting for clues that would lead them to the Coleman Treasure Chest.

Camp Coleman proved to be a good ground for nurturing the self-confidence of young people in an environment of fun and adventure.

STEFFI rappels down a three-story building (top). The Tempuras team help each other in building a fire (right).

OUTDOOR EQUIPMENT

GELO (center) was cited as Camp Coleman's Most Improved Camper

Body beautiful: 8 tips to achieve one

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

TIME and again, the question is asked, "What is the definition of beauty?" There are as many answers to this question as there are different points of view but perhaps the answer lies in the harmony of body with soul.

There is beauty within as there is beauty without. Let us begin with the most obvious—the physical.

Your body is a near-perfect creation, a machine, if you will, that can either be a passenger car or a race car. Which one do you want? Once more, we go back to your ideal. If you would like to sculpt your body to its highest level, it can be done. Here's how:

1. **Adopt a healthy lifestyle.** This means your meal plan should include a combination of the required food —vegetables, fruits, carbohydrates, dairy/protein, fat and oils, sweets, in the order of their importance. Follow the color guide. Put as many colorful foods on your plate. More often than not, they would be fruits and veggies. Try, if you can, to include some organic food in your food purchases. Fewer chemicals in your food will certainly contribute to a healthier you. Buy the latest cookbooks that have innovative ways to prepare vegetables and fruits with the minimum use of cream, oil and sugar. Note that I didn't say eliminate these ingredients. I only ask that you limit your intake.

2. **Exercise.** There is no other way to look good except through some form of physical exertion. Enroll straight away in a gym with the best equipment, those so designed to mold your muscles to an efficiency level you never expected. If you think that aerobics is all you need, think again. Combine your program with a cardiovascular and strength-training workout. While brisk walking is good, it isn't enough to achieve the appealing body that you may want. If it is just plain heart-healthy workout, then stick to your exercise.

3. **Take as much purified/clean water if you can.** Eight to ten glasses would only do you good. Want to curb your appetite? Take one full glass of water 30 minutes before mealtime. This ought to do the trick. Still hungry? Have a fruit or a high fiber food like apples or turnips (*singkamas*). If you are a midnight snacker, try eating fruit like bananas instead of reaching out for that bag of potato chips. On the question of what kind of water one should drink, whether distilled, mineral or ionized, there is a raging controversy over this. We will look into this issue more extensively in a future column.

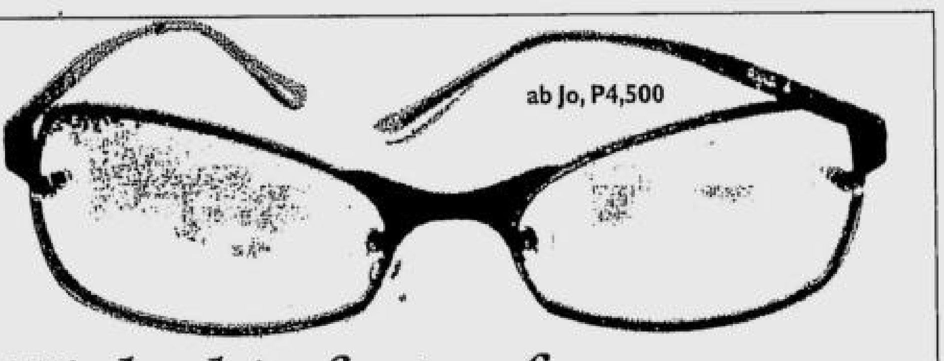
4. **Sleep six to eight hours each night.** The reason we sleep is because our brain needs to rest and our cells require time to renew. Lack of sleep will be reflected in your skin quality and low energy level.

5. **Detoxify' your system.** To do this, you should be eating a lot of fiber in your diet. A healthy person should eliminate at least once a day. If you are not doing this, then your body is telling you that there is something wrong with your diet and you must act now. There are high fiber drinks in the market like Nestlé Calcium Plus with fiber or Nutren Fiber. If this doesn't work, then add Fibrosine to your drink. Better yet, use this surefire formula: Take oatmeal every morning without fail. Use the old-fashioned slow-cook kind—it has more roughage. Here's another trick: Eat a bowl of fresh, ripe tamarind or fresh strawberries. It always works. Sometimes an enema is in order, but do not try this without medical advice. A mixture of dried chamomile with warm water is soothing and gentle. Half a lemon and water is a cold-fighter.

6. **Supplementation.** One can never underestimate the power of multivitamins and minerals. Take one daily. Add your antioxidants, A, C, E, Selenium, plus your B complex.

7. **Beautify.** Go see a dermatologist at least once weekly. The Mendez Medical or Belo Medical can assist you. They are equipped to design a beauty program for you. Have a facial at least once a month. Other treatments to smoothen the skin are there for the picking, of course. Go to a spa. You need to relax anyway. A twice-a-week visit ought to pamper you well.

8. **Spa at home.** Of course it can be done. One of the easiest treatments you can do is to give yourself a yoghurt rub. This has lactic acid designed to exfoliate your skin and soften it.



ab Jo, P4,500

High chic factor for eyewear with lowercase name

WELL-KNOWN European designer agnes b. prefers her name in lower case. Though she has always made an effort to keep a low profile, her creativity and originality have become inescapable in the United States and Japan. In Hollywood, agnes b.'s groupies include Leonardo Di Caprio, Jodie Foster and David Bowie.

In the Philippines, agnes b. recently entered the market through her agnes b. Lunettes, the designer's collection of sleek and trendy eyewear.

Hopefully, this is only the beginning of trendy Manila's initiation into the art of agnes b., who has always been involved in the arts.

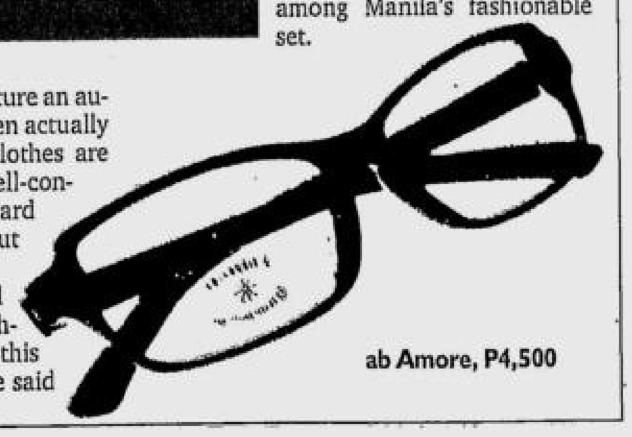
Her store windows always feature an authentic movie poster that has been actually used in a movie theater. Her clothes are simple in design but always well-constructed. She tends to lean toward basic colors and target a young but upwardly mobile market.

"My designs are constructed to be unfashionable or out of fashion. You can't say it was from this year or that year," agnes b. once said in an interview.

"I like clean, simple clothes. There must be an idea, but it doesn't have to be complicated to be beautiful. The material has to be new or at least the use of the material."

Among her celebrated creations are her cotton crewneck shirt, cargo pants in black satin, and the DeNiro shirt (named after the designer's favorite actor).

Exclusively distributed by I.O.S. Marketing Corp. headed by Evelyn Marchan, agnes b. Lunettes is expected to become a preferred brand among Manila's fashionable set.



ab Amore, P4,500

How visualization improves physical performance

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

IT has long been known that the human mind is a very powerful organ with limitless potentials. The oft-quoted saying, "Whatever your mind can conceive, you can achieve," has almost become a cliche.

But it was only during the last two decades that modern science, with its high-tech instruments, has come up with incontrovertible proof that what we merely imagine has exactly the same effect on the body as the actual physical experience or event.

And this is the reason imaging or visualization has been applied to almost every aspect of human endeavor, from goal setting, sports performance, self-healing and memory improvement, to problem-solving and decision-making.

"Not only does a visualized experience condition the human brain," says Judd Blaslotto, Ph.D., a world-class powerlifter and author of a number of books on mind control, "but it will also program the human body. This mind-body connection brought about by visualization is known as the video motor concept. As your brain conceives of an act, it generates impulses that prompt neurons to 'perform' the movement being imagined by transmitting those impulses from the brain to the muscles. According to this concept, if you close your eyes and visualize yourself doing something, your body's actions are programmed in exactly the same manner as if you actually did them."

This was dramatically validated or confirmed in an experiment conducted in one American university.

"At the University of Chicago," reported Dr. Blaslotto, "a study was conducted to determine the effects of visualization on the free-throw performance of basketball players."

"First, the athletes were tested to determine their free-throw proficiency. They were then randomly assigned to one of three experimental groups. The first went to the gym every day for one hour and practiced throwing free throws.

"The second [group] also went to the gym, but instead of physically practicing, they lay down and simply visualized themselves successfully shooting.

"The third group did nothing. In fact, they were instructed to forget about basketball: 'Don't touch a basketball—don't even think about it!'

"At the end of 30 days, the three groups were again tested to determine their free-throw proficiency. The players who hadn't practiced at all showed no improvement in performance; many in that group actually exhibited a drop. Those who had physically practiced one hour each day showed a performance increase of 24 percent. Here's the clincher: the visualization group, by merely imagining themselves successfully shooting free throws, improved 23 percent!"

> Modern science has proven that what we merely imagine has exactly the same effect on the body as the actual physical experience

Mental imaging

Western scientific interest in using mental techniques to improve sports performance actually began about 25 years ago, after Americans noticed that Russian and other Eastern European athletes were gaining more gold medals in the Olympic games than they did.

When they sent observers to Russia to see how its athletes were being trained, they were shocked to learn that it consisted of 25-percent physical and 75-percent mental training, the exact opposite of what the Americans were doing. When they increased mental training and included other disciplines such as meditation and visualization, their athletic performance improved dramatically.

In my Inner Mind development seminar, I teach participants how to use mental imaging for stress control, self-healing and goal-setting. Many of those who have consistently applied the mental techniques they learned in the course have reported incredible results.

A group of Catholic nuns, for example, reported being able to get a loan for their building, which was previously rejected. A Chinese-Filipino trader reported receiving a big order for a product which was no longer needed by the buyer for the current year but which could be used next year yet. And a well-known movie actress got her dream car from her estranged husband after actively visualizing it daily for several weeks.

As I always say, "The mind knows no limits, aside from those it accepts." Now, modern science is proving how true that statement is.

Write to 308 Prince Plaza I, 106 Legaspi St., Greenbelt, Makati City, tel. 810-7245 or 892-6806. E-mail jlicauco@edsamail.com.ph. Visit my website at http://j.licauco.tripod.com. Listen to my dzMM radio program every Sunday, 6-8 p.m.

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Healthy solutions on the go

AN EMERGING "health buff" movement prompts most people to ask why have we suddenly become so concerned with our health? The answer is simple. Now more than ever, there are so many "health downers" that we simply must equip ourselves with the proper protective gear.

At the top of these problems is pollution. Second is proliferation of so much synthetic and fatty foods.

Finally, in a world where people are often defined by their careers, stress and stress-related habits (smoking, drinking, caffeine overdosing and over-eating) have become major health concerns.

We all know that we should watch what we eat and exercise regularly, but between work and having a life, who has the time?

Allow Health Express to do the job for you, as Anna Margarita Pascual, marketing manager, says: "Everyone has to be healthy; allow Health Express to help you take care of yourself."

Pascual further explains that their products are categorized into vitamins and minerals, alternative medicine, sports nutrition, dietary supplements add specialty products. From preventive to maintenance, Health Express is a one-stop health store that has everything for everyone.

Vitamins and minerals such as Natures Bounty's Super Antioxidant Formula, a combination of Vitamins A, C and E is fortified by Selenium. Health Express also has an array of natural alternative medicines for specific diseases that people normally take prescription medicine for such as *ampalaya* capsule for lowering blood sugar levels or gingko biloba for improving memory.

Some of the sports nutrition supplements they carry are TwinLab L-Glutamine 1,000 mg (for quick muscle recovery) and TwinLab Taurine (an insulin mimicker that regulates blood sugar and prevents muscle damage). Health buff Marc Nelson is a regular Health Express customer and takes sports nutrition products such as Glycerlean and Cell-Tech.

When asked which of their product line is most popular, Pascual said that it is their dietary supplements. Their dietary supplements are divided into fat burning/blocking supplements such as USA Labs Fat Burner or the USA Labs Cutting Edge metabolic enhancers. Lifetime Slim Life Thermogenic and Twin Lab Ripped Fuel; natural dietary supplements (that helps in flushing out excessive water retention and appetite suppresants), Natures Bounty's Grapefruit Diet and Waterpill; and meal replacement products (regular meal substitutes minus the fat and cholesterol) TwinLab Twinfast Chocolate/Vanilla.

Health Express is located at Glorietta 3, Robinsons Galleria, Alabang Town Center, Festival Supermall, Tutuban Centermall, Robinsons Ermita Los Banos, Bacolod, Iloilo, Metro East and Big R Supermarket in Cagayan de Oro City.

SARS immunity through optimum living

OPTIMUM Living Consultants will hold a seminar-workshop on "Optimum Living Now" on May 31, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. at Phildra Partnership Center, located at 59 Salvador St. Loyola Heights, QC.

Those who want to partake in this crusade towards well-being and wholeness may sign up for an integrated session of lectures, diagrams, exercises, self-tests and moments of sharing for only P2,000 per person inclusive of lunch, snacks and handouts.

Call Ching A. Gutierrez at tel. 434-5542 or fax 426-0455; Sandy Tabar, 259-1329 or fax 426-5079, mobile 0917-6117735 or e-mail sandytabar@edsamail.com.ph.

1st GMA fun run

GMA Network will hold a fun run for the benefit of Unang Hakbang sa Kinabukasan. The event is slated on June 1 at the Quirino Grandstand in Manila.

GMA artists will join partner companies and running groups. Cash prizes await top finishers. Special Kapuso awards will be given and raffle prizes are at stake. Ever Gotesco Malls, Gold's Gym and GMA Kapuso Foundation Office are the designated registration centers for the said drive.

There'll be a registration fee of P150.

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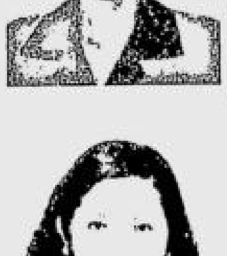
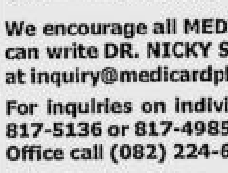
Our accredited doctors are not allowed to charge extra for services they have rendered to MEDICard members that are within the coverage and benefits of their HMO program. However, it is usual, based on "investigations" on reports like this, that the "additional fees" are for services or medicines given that are not included in the member's program. We need to look into more details on your complaint to determine why and what you were asked to pay for. Please provide us with an incident report, you may send it to MEDICard c/o the Provider Relations Department.

Meet your MEDICard Team



Meet **Dr. Charito F. Cruz-Bermudez,** MEDICard accredited specialist based at St. Luke's Medical Center. "Doktora Cherry", as she has gone to be known, is a UST Medicine graduate who specializes in Internal Medicine. She also holds fellowship training in Rheumatology, which she finished at the UST hospital. She is a Fellow of the Philippine College of Physicians and the Philippine Rheumatology Association. Doc Cherry is also a clinical instructor at SLMC, College of Medicine and a visiting consultant for FEU-NRMF and the Amang Rodriguez Medical Center in Marikina. Members may visit her for consultations at her clinic at Room 136 every Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 9 AM to 12 noon.

Obstetrics and Gynecology is the field of specialization of **Dr. Melanie S. Omar**. Dr. Omar was conferred Doctor of Medicine at the University of Santo Tomas and recently finished her residency training for her specialization in OB-Gynecology at the Quirino Memorial Medical Center. She is a proud member of the Philippine Medical Association and the Rizal Medical Society. For your consultation needs, you may visit Dr. Omar's clinic at Room 207, the World Citi Medical Center (formerly QCMC) every Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, from 1 to 5 PM.



Dr. Frederico S. Valero Jr. has with him more than 15 years of clinical experience in his profession. After finishing his degree in Doctor of Medicine at FEU-Dr. Nicanor Reyes Medical Foundation, he chose to take specialization residency for Internal Medicine at St. Luke's Medical Center. For consultations, visit his clinic at Calamba Doctors Hospital, Km. 49, National Highway, Brgy. Paciano, Calamba, Laguna at Room 13B Medical Arts Building, Mondays to Saturdays, except Wednesdays, 3 to 5 PM.

We encourage all MEDICard members to voice out their concerns and issues at hand. BE HEARD AND BE READ. You can write DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA at 9/F Sagittarius Bldg. H.V. De la Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City or e-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com. For feedback on availment of our services, e-mail us at feedback@medicardphils.com.

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ISO 9002

How to get a good night's sleep

From page C1

sleep experts.

Cool, dark and quiet

It has been said that modern man is sleep-deprived because of the invention of electricity. Our ancestors followed the natural rhythm of nature and their internal body clocks. They slept when it was dark and awoke when it was light. But electricity has artificially extended our nights and our internal clocks have become confused.

The perfect sleeping environment is cool, dark and quiet. Room temperature should be neither too hot nor too cold. A dark room is important because our bodies respond to darkness by producing melatonin, the sleep hormone, and light is one of the most powerful cues for us to wake up. Researchers have found that even just the reflection of a street lamp can cause fragmented sleep in sensitive people.

A soft whirring sound in the background like that produced by an electric fan or air conditioner will lull you to sleep but sharp sudden noises like your cell phone beeping or your neighbor shouting will wake you up. Experts suggest using eyeshades and/or earplugs if you can't control light and sounds from entering your bedroom. Earplugs can sometimes be the most practical solution if your partner snores loudly.

Another suggestion is to dim the lights in your bedroom a few hours before sleeping so your body starts winding down. Avoid watching TV shows that are loud and violent. Listening to soft relaxing music will put you in the mood for sleeping. So will reading a book as long as it is not too emotional and stimulating.

Make your bed and lie in it

Your bed should only be for rest, relaxation, sleep and sex. Avoid doing anything else on it like eating and working. Your body should be conditioned to go into sleep-mode when it lies down on your bed. If you have serious sleep problems, experts say your whole bedroom should be off-limits to TV, radio, work-related projects, and anything else not connected with sleep.

The mattress and pillows you use can make the difference between a good night's sleep and a restless one. If you have any kind of musculoskeletal problem, it's even more important that you choose the right kind of bedding. If you sleep with a partner, the bed should be big enough for both of you.

Develop regular sleep-wake cycle

Stick to a regular sleeping and waking-up schedule every day. Every time you modify your schedule by a few hours, the body's internal rhythm gets thrown off whack. Some people are more sensitive than others to this disruption.

They still do not know why, but researchers have found that sleeping early is what makes for a more restful night. If you sleep late, you wake up feeling disoriented even if you sleep the right number of hours. One study found that people who sleep and wake up early live longer than people who sleep late even though they sleep the same amount. Other studies have found that night-shift workers have more health problems than day-shift workers even if they have similar hours of sleep.

Sleep on problems

Avoid thinking about problems at night. Tomorrow is another day. Problems will still be there but you won't have the energy to deal with them properly if you spend the whole night tossing and turning in bed with worry and anxiety. A good night's sleep is what you need to find a creative solution or new perspective on your problems.

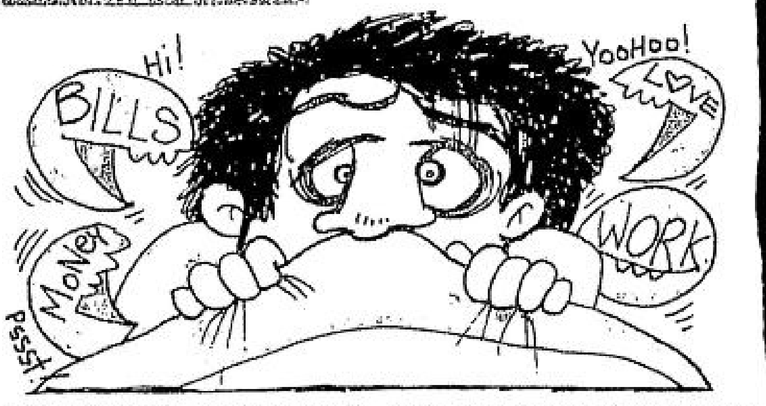
Experts say that if you really can't stop stress and anxiety from keeping you awake, get out of bed and do your worrying in another part of the house. What you are trying to avoid is linking your bed with stressful thoughts. Writing, praying, meditating and reading are some of the things you can do to help keep your anxiety under control. Hopefully, your mind and emotions will quiet down enough to allow you to go back to sleep.

Even if you don't have any problems, if you are still awake 30 minutes after hitting your pillow, experts say it's better to get up and do something relaxing until you get sleepy.

The worst possible thing to do is to keep looking at the clock trying to force yourself to sleep and becoming more upset and stressed as each hour passes because you are not yet asleep.

Eat, drink and sleep well

Don't sleep immediately after eating a heavy meal. Give it at least three hours; otherwise, heartburn and indigestion can keep you awake. But don't go to sleep hungry either because both your brain and your stomach will keep you up. A light dinner is the common-sense compromise.



If a full bladder wakes you up several times a night, avoid drinking fluids two hours before sleeping. If in spite of this, you still get up to go to the bathroom often, go see your urologist.

Unless you are one of those rare individuals, like my husband, who can drink coffee and fall asleep right after, take your last cup of java early in the afternoon. Remember, too, that other stuff like chocolate, tea, colas, some diet pills, and certain medications contain caffeine. Sensitive individuals can be kept awake by having a slice of chocolate cake after dinner.

Alcohol might put you to sleep but it's a fake kind of restful sleep that is interrupted and makes you wake up feeling even more tired. This is because alcohol interferes with REM or dream sleep.

Research indicates that smokers take longer to fall asleep and wake up more often during the night. Nicotine is a stimulant, so if you must smoke, have your last cigarette a few hours before sleeping. Besides, smoking in bed is a fire hazard.

Natural sleep aids

For decades, Europeans have used the herb valerian to relax. Also known as nature's Valium, valerian is a mild tranquilizer and muscle relaxant that can help you sleep if your insomnia is due to restlessness and anxiety. It is not a sleeping pill, is not addictive, does not make you groggy in the morning, and so far, has no known side effects. The only negative thing is that it smells like sweaty socks! However, if you have an existing health condition, always consult your doctor first to find out if valerian is okay for your condition and if it can safely be combined with a medication you are already taking. Valerian should never be combined with any other type of sedative.

Kava-kava, which is an anti-anxiety herb, is not recommended because of reports linking its use to liver damage.

Scientists have found that a 30-minute soak in warm water (102 °F) taken two hours before bedtime hastens faster and deeper sleep. This is because the onset of sleepiness is associated with a drop in body temperature. A warm bath raises our temperature slightly then as it drops, it induces sleepiness.

Exercise, but not too close to bedtime

Many people find that regular exercise helps them have better sleep. However, working out too close to bedtime can keep you awake. One reason could be that your nervous system is over-stimulated and takes some time to calm down. Another reason is that your body temperature stays elevated longer, and by the time it drops enough for you to get sleepy, the rooster is already crowing.

At least three hours between your workout and bedtime should suffice. Very sensitive individuals need to stick to morning exercise while some people have no problem whatsoever sleeping right after an evening run.

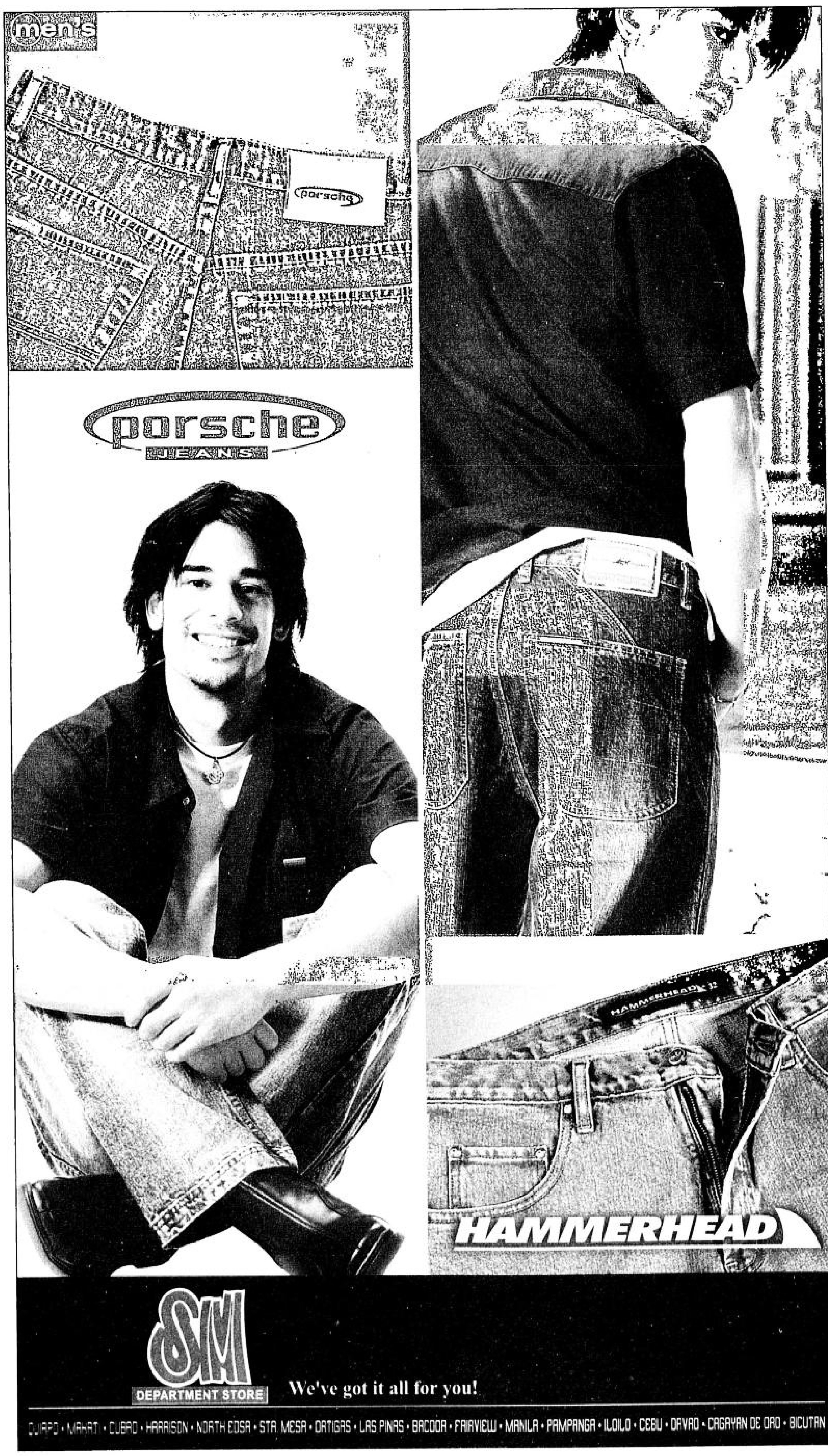
To nap or not to nap

While napping on the job used to be a sign of laziness and inefficiency, more and more office workers are realizing the importance of taking daily 20-minute "power" naps to increase productivity. However, naps can never take the place of the right amount of sleep.

Some experts say that if you are having problems sleeping, it is best to avoid napping. Others say that a nap is okay as long as you keep it short.

Watch "In Fitness & In Health" Monday-Friday on Studio 23, 6-6:30 a.m. and on Net25, 6-6:30 p.m.

For past articles and exercises or suggestions for future articles, go to www.tinajuanfitness.com.



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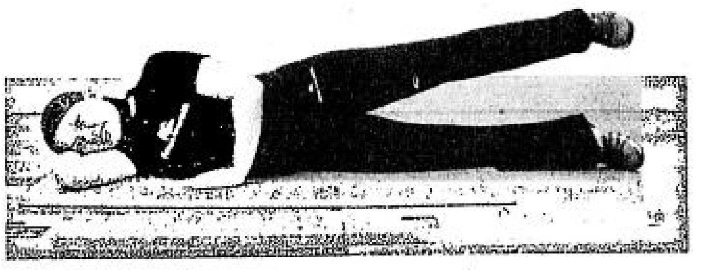
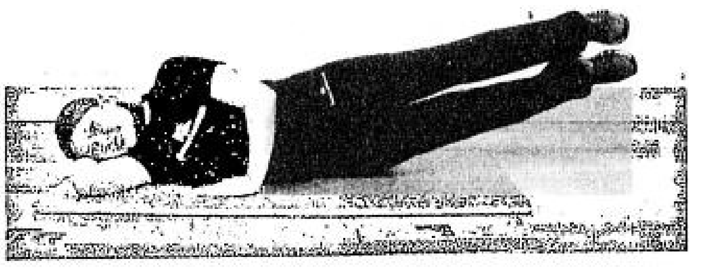
EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Pilates side leg lift

(Series 1)





THIS Pilates-inspired exercise strengthens the obliques (muscles that crisscross the waist) as well as hips and inner thigh muscles.

Equipment:
Exercise mat

Exercise technique:

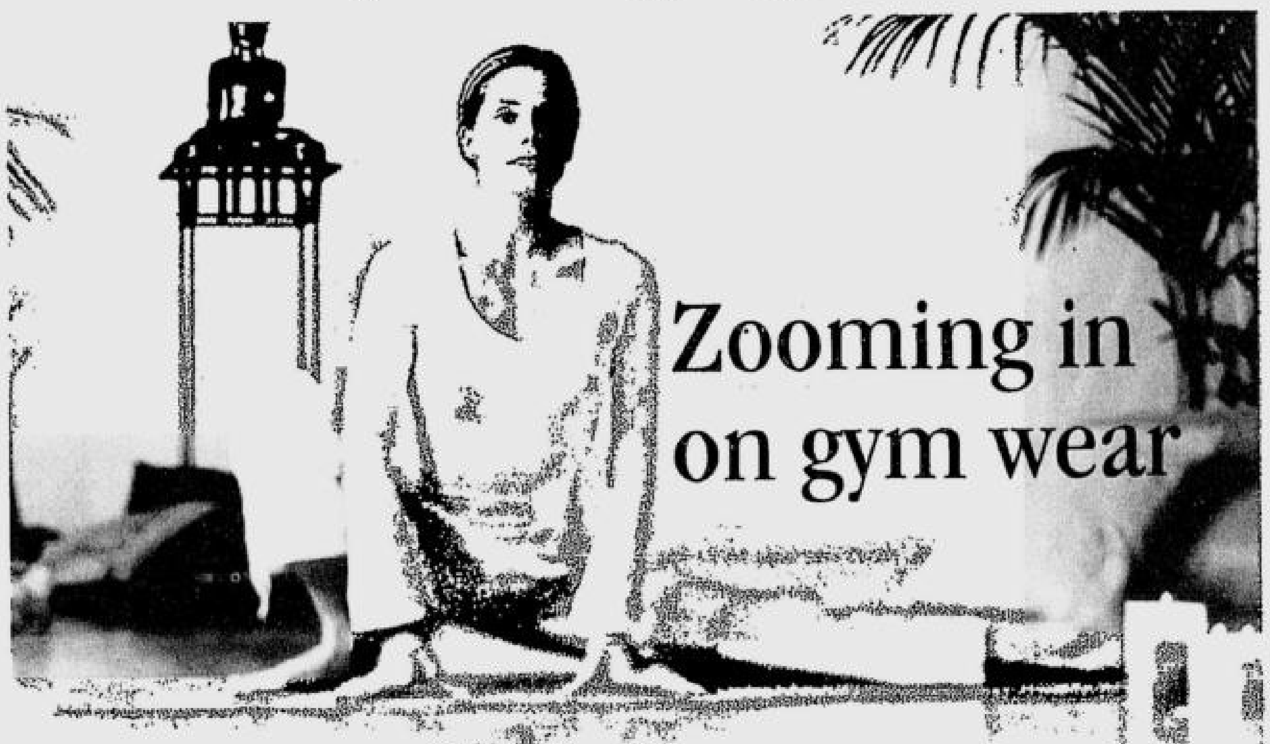
1. Lie on your side with your legs together in line with your hips and shoulders.
2. Rest your head on your bent bottom arm, and place your top hand in front of your chest on the mat with your palm flat and your fingertips facing your head.
3. Lift the top leg and hold it steady. Then, lift the bottom leg.
4. Slowly lower both legs back to the mat.

Performance tips:

1. Always contract your abdominal muscles first before you lift your legs to protect your lower back.
2. Breathing: Inhale as you lift the top leg followed by the bottom leg. Exhale as you lower both to the mat.
3. Foot position: Point your feet as you lift top and bottom leg. Flex your feet as you lower the legs down.
4. Avoid jerking. Move slowly with control as you lift and lower legs.
5. Keep your shoulder and hip from rolling forward or backwards as you lift your legs by contracting your abdominal muscles and visualizing a glass of water on your shoulder and hip.
6. Always lengthen and elongate your legs as you lift.
7. Try to bring your ankles together when you lift the bottom leg to join the top leg. This makes you strongly contract your inner thigh muscles.
8. This is an advanced exercise. Do not attempt this if you have a history of lower back problems. Ask your doctor first.

Repetitions:
Do five to 10 repetitions on each side.

Fitness LIFESTYLE



Zooming in on gym wear

WRAP top and drawstring pants

STRAPPY racerback

WHETHER starting a new fitness regimen at the gym, jogging around the park or enjoying the great outdoors or golf course, View From performance sportswear from Marks & Spencer has stylish pieces suitable for everyone.

View From offers the newest fabric innovation. The range is ergonomically designed and includes Active Dry T-shirts that wick moisture away, keeping you dry while working out. Updating your gym kit is easy with fresh new styles in great new shapes and colors.

View From sportswear both performs well and looks great. It is designed to work with your body so you can concentrate on getting fit in comfort and style.

The Spring/Summer '03 View From range is available in Marks & Spencer Shangri-La.

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- Whitens dark spots, scars & unwanted marks
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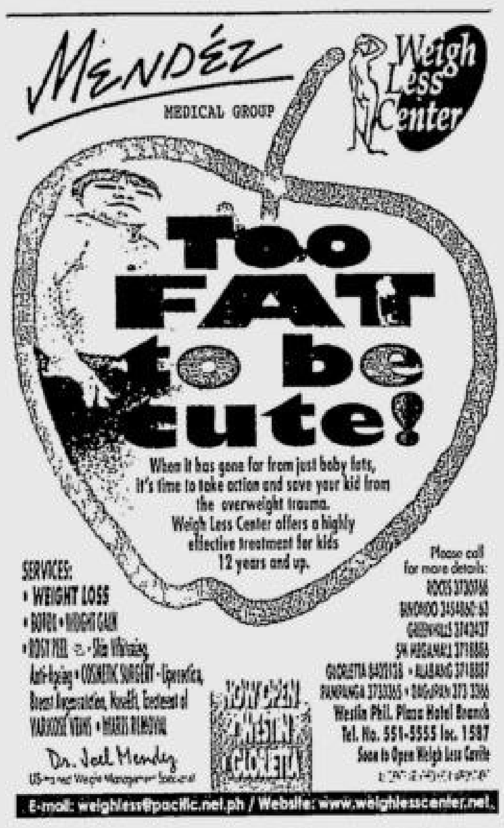

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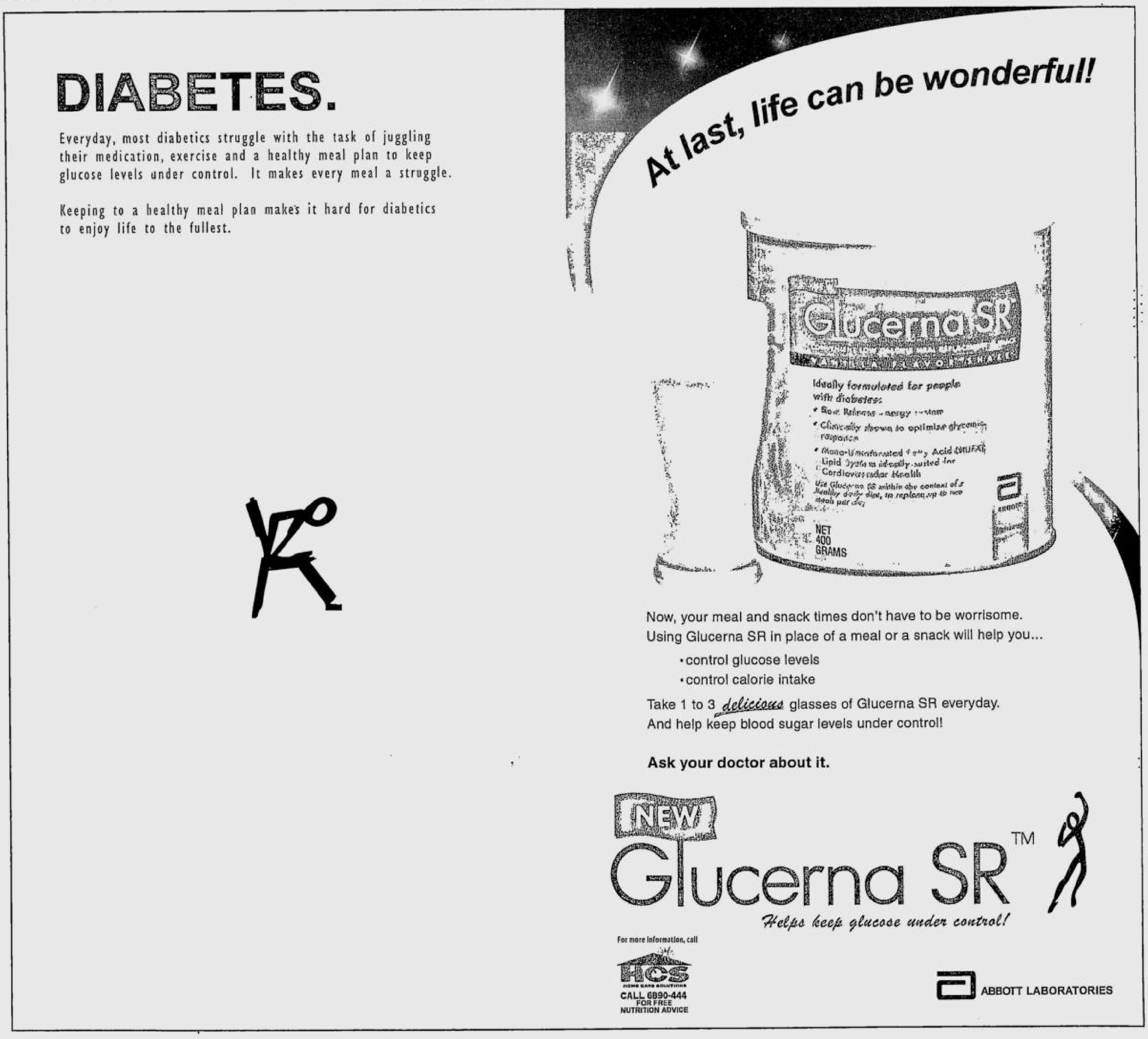

DIABETES.
Everyday, most diabetics struggle with the task of juggling their medication, exercise and a healthy meal plan to keep glucose levels under control. It makes every meal a struggle.

Keeping to a healthy meal plan make's it hard for diabetics to enjoy life to the fullest.

At last, life can be wonderful!

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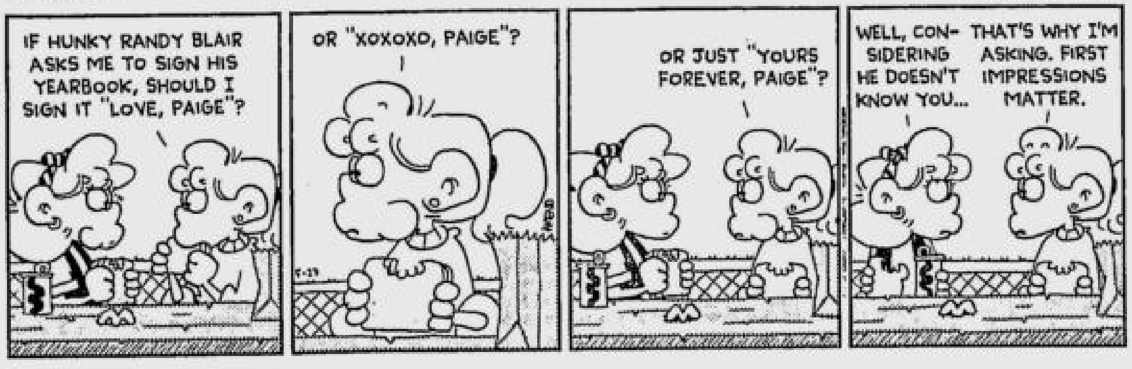
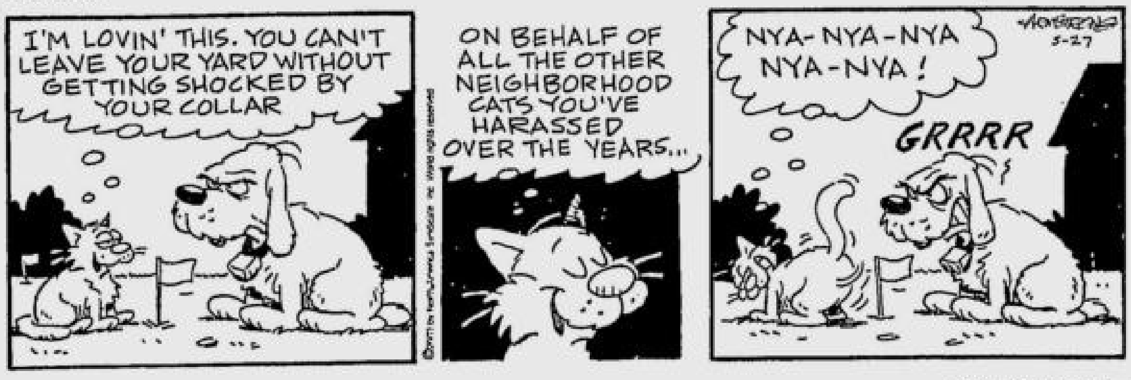
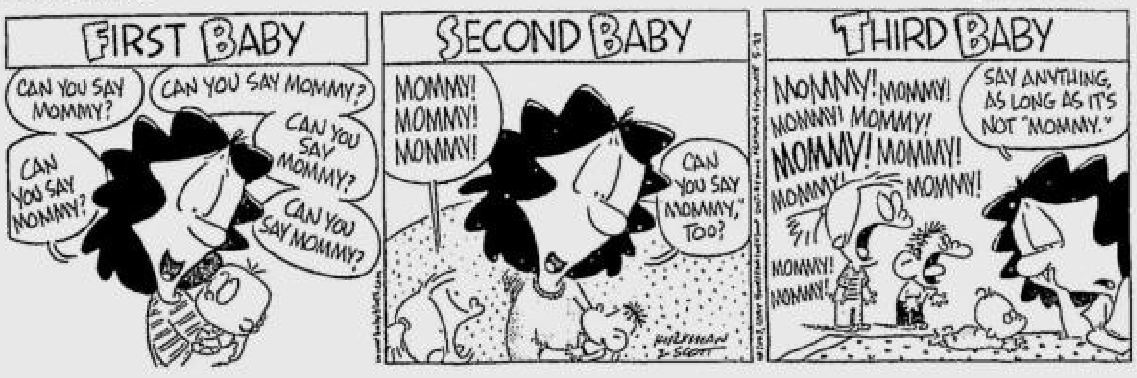

IF HUNKY RANDY BLAIR ASKS ME TO SIGN HIS YEARBOOK, SHOULD I SIGN IT "LOVE, PAIGE"?
OR "XOXOXO, PAIGE"?
OR JUST "YOURS FOREVER, PAIGE"?
WELL, CONSIDERING HE DOESN'T KNOW YOU...
THAT'S WHY I'M ASKING. FIRST IMPRESSIONS MATTER.

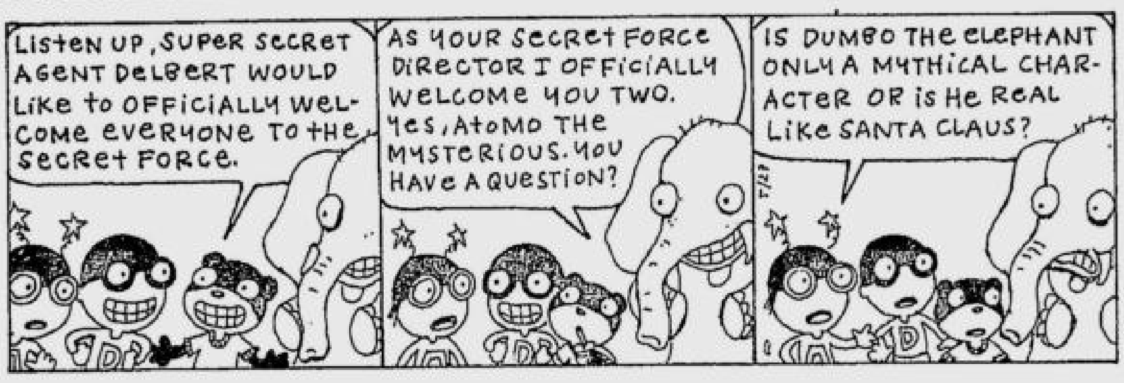
MARVIN BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I'M LOVIN' THIS. YOU CAN'T LEAVE YOUR YARD WITHOUT GETTING SHOCKED BY YOUR COLLAR
ON BEHALF OF ALL THE OTHER NEIGHBORHOOD CATS YOU'VE HARASSED OVER THE YEARS...
NYA-NYA-NYA NYA-NYA!
GRRRR
5-27

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


FIRST BABY
CAN YOU SAY MOMMY?
CAN YOU SAY MOMMY?
CAN YOU SAY MOMMY?
CAN YOU SAY MOMMY?
CAN YOU SAY MOMMY?
SECOND BABY
MOMMY! MOMMY! MOMMY!
CAN YOU SAY "MOMMY," TOO?
THIRD BABY
MOMMY! MOMMY! MOMMY! MOMMY! MOMMY! MOMMY! MOMMY! MOMMY! MOMMY! MOMMY!
SAY ANYTHING, AS LONG AS IT'S NOT "MOMMY."

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Listen up, Super secret Agent Delbert would like to officially welcome everyone to the Secret Force.
As your secret Force Director I officially welcome you two. Yes, Atomo the Mysterious. You have a question?
Is Dumbo the elephant only a mythical character or is he real like Santa Claus?

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: People love your sense of humor. You have sophisticated social skills. Whatever you embrace, you embrace enthusiastically. You work keenly either to develop your talents or on behalf of family and others. Your ability to persevere at something is the key to your success. This year is full of exciting beginnings and new adventures. Birthdate of: Jamie Oliver, TV chef; Louis Gossett Jr., actor; Isadora Duncan, modern-dance pioneer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Be careful about promising money or possessions to friends today. You might feel obligated when you have no need to be. Things are confusing here. Go slowly.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is not the day to fiercely defend your opinions to authority figures or bosses. You might not be on their wavelength. Communications can be hopelessly misunderstood!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You feel adrift with daydreams and fuzzy thoughts today. Don't worry about this; many people feel the same way. Try to look as if you understand what's going on. Just fake it.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): This is a poor day to lend or borrow money. This also applies to your possessions and the possessions of others. Confused communications are likely.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Important discussions with partners or bosses might take place today. However, you do not have all the facts. You might also mistake what others want. Be very careful.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Religious, spiritual and mystical subjects appeal to you today. Do not go out in left field because of some obscure teaching. Do whatever you can to keep your feet on the ground today.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): The Cinderella complex—wanting to be rescued—is rampant today. Don't let anybody con you out of something. Keep a level head and your eyes open.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Because you feel sorry for someone, you might become involved in a situation that you want nothing to do with. (There is a difference between genuine caring and idiot compassion.)

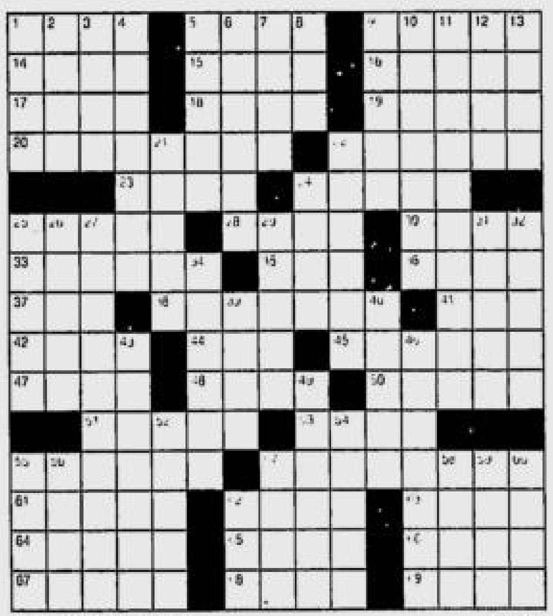
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): This is a poor day to sign contracts or negotiate important deals. You don't have all the facts, and neither does anybody else. (Lots of fuzzy thinking out there today.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Stay away from gambling and long shots today. You will think you can win when you can't. Be vigilant about children and possible accidents related to them.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Be wary of idealizing people today, especially family members. You might be seeing what you want to see, rather than what actually is. Wishful thinking surrounds you.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You often daydream and visualize things. Today you can really go to town! Enjoy your daydreams, but avoid important negotiations and business dealings today.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By John Underwood
New York, NY
5/27/03

ACROSS
1 Secular
5 Doubtful
9 Tall structure
14 Royal Peruvian
15 Pineapple brand
16 Brazilian novelist Jorge
17 Goblet part
18 Son of Aphrodite
19 Padded gloves
20 Spoiler
22 City on Seneca Lake
23 Straight line
24 Zeal
25 Promo link
28 Frank Herbert sci-fi epic
30 Letter-carriers' org.
33 Tylenol rival
35 180 degrees from SSW
36 Piece of cake
37 Cpt.'s immediate subordinate
38 Bakery treat
41 Sailor's assent
42 Young foxes
44 Brooks of "High Anxiety"
45 Oral
47 Satiric comic Mort
48 Queen's subjects?
50 Wintry weather forecast
51 Hedgehog spine
53 Trudge
55 Scamper
57 Beach meal
61 Chicago airport
62 Felt regret
63 One woodwind
64 Keepsake
65 First sibling
66 Shout
67 Edberg or Borg
68 Ms. Doe
69 Stick it out

DOWN
1 Framed Mona
2 Not in favor of
3 Champagne bucket
4 Fine linen
5 Role model
6 Like liars' tongues
7 Ice on the move
8 Affirmative
9 Domesticated
10 Menacing
11 Pond denizen
12 1999 Ron Howard film
13 Santa __, CA
21 Of an ancient alphabet
22 Frat boys
24 Dancer Pavlova
25 Flat-head nails
26 The Jewel in the Crown
27 Temblor
29 Male relative
31 Check recipient
32 Winded
34 Without feeling
39 Unwrap
40 Salts source
43 Pronounced indistinctly
46 Influential clique members
49 Lymphoid organ
52 Actress Dunne
54 Soup spoon
55 Rummies
56 Grub
57 Oscar-winner Gooding
58 Incite
59 Tropical nut
60 Sinuous
62 British rule over India

Monday's Puzzle Solved

H	O	R	A		M	I	D	S	T		T	M	A	N
A	L	U	M		A	D	I	E	U		R	A	C	E
T	I	E	B	R	E	A	K	E	R		E	T	N	A
E	N	D	U	E			E	M	B	R	A	C	E	R
			S	C	A	B		S	O	U	T	H		
M	E	C	H	A	N	I	C		S	N	I	P	E	S
O	R	R		P	E	S	O	S		S	N	O	R	T
D	O	O	R		W	O	O	E	D		G	I	N	A
E	D	S	E	L		N	E	W	E	L		N	I	N
M	E	S	C	A	L		R	E	M	I	T	T	E	D
		C	O	T	E	S		R	I	L	E			
B	R	O	U	H	A	H	A			A	N	G	E	R
Y	O	U	R		S	E	R	V	I	C	E	A	C	E
O	U	R	S		E	L	L	E	N		T	I	R	E
B	E	T	E		S	L	O	T	S		S	T	U	D

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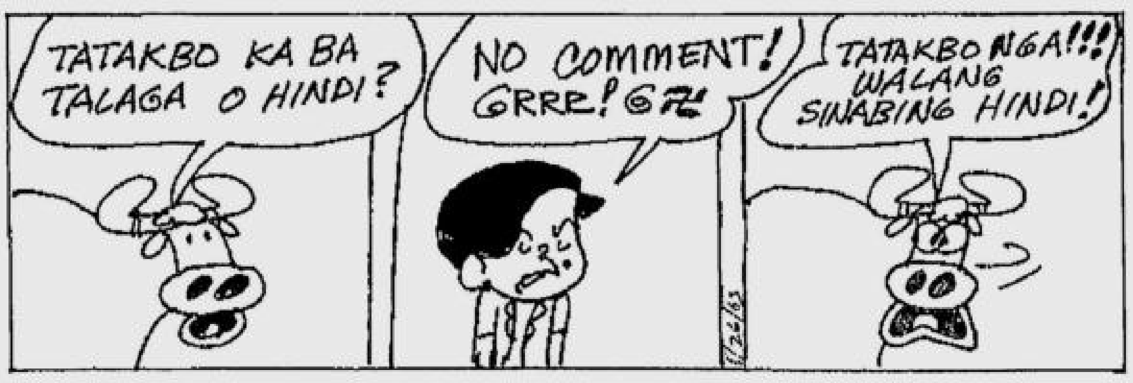
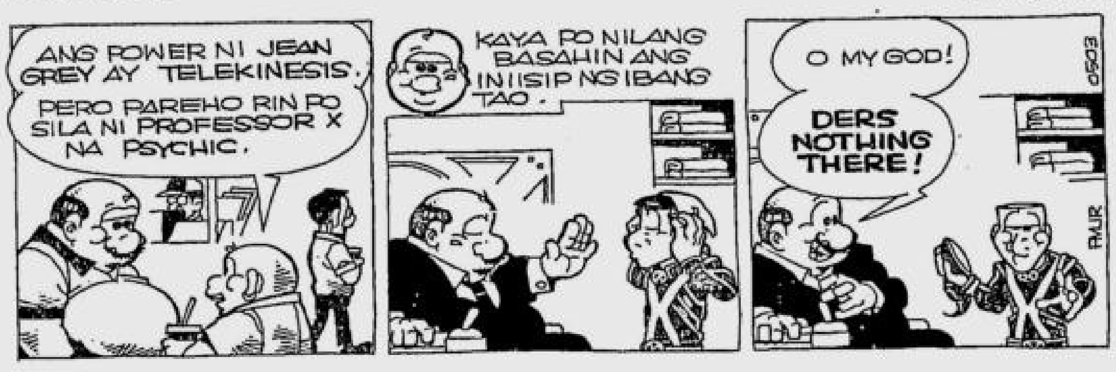
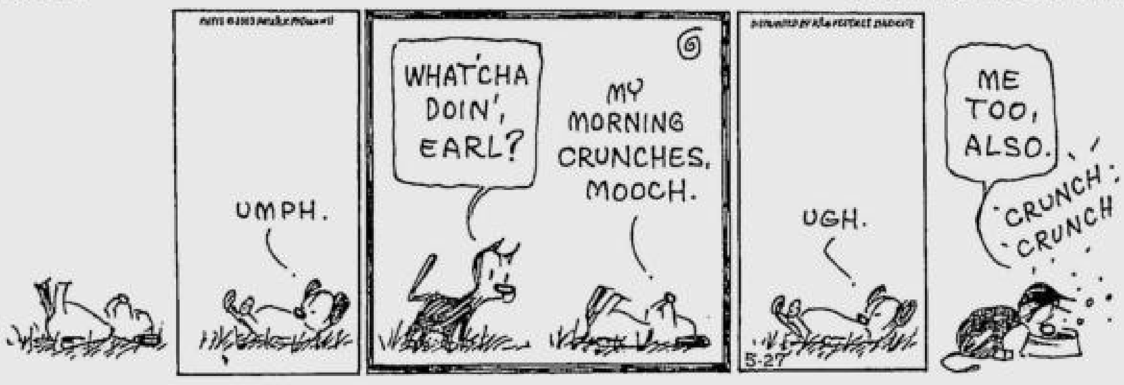
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


TATAKBO KA BA TALAGA O HINDI?
NO COMMENT! GRRR!
TATAKBO NGA!!! WALANG SINABING HINDI!

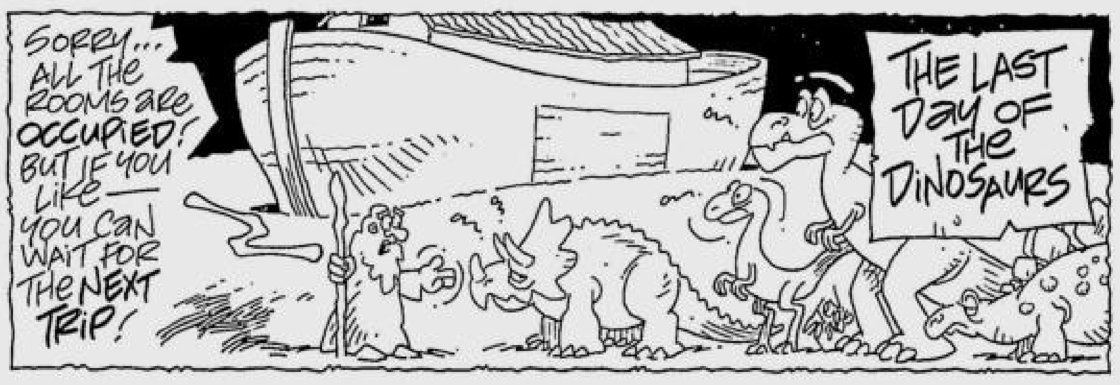
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


ANG POWER NI JEAN GREY AY TELEKINESIS.
PERO PAREHO RIN PO SILA NI PROFESSOR X NA PSYCHIC.
KAYA PO NILANG BASAHIN ANG INIISIP NG IBANG TAO.
O MY GOD!
DERS NOTHING THERE!
0503
PMJR

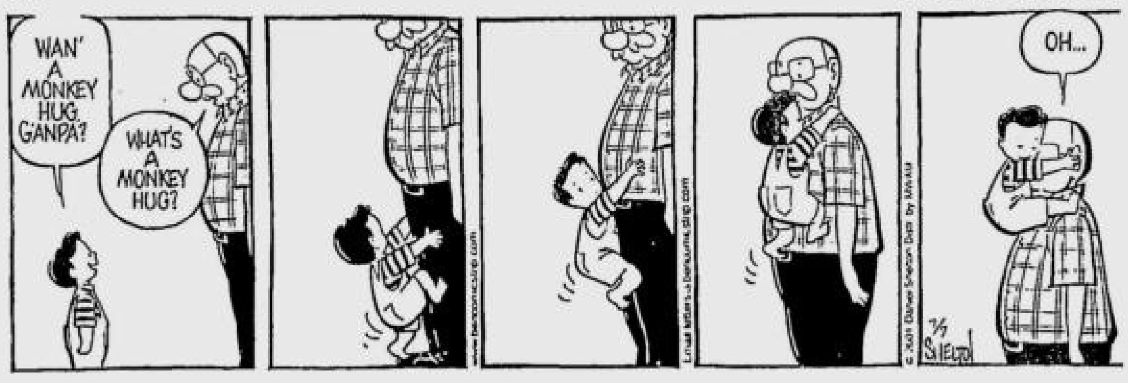
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


UMPH.
WHAT'CHA DOIN', EARL?
MY MORNING CRUNCHES, MOOCH.
UGH.
ME TOO, ALSO.
CRUNCH CRUNCH
5-27

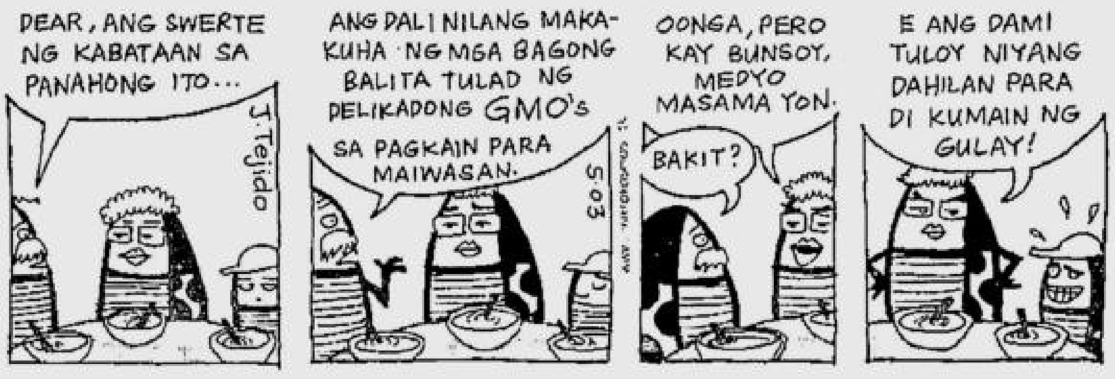
DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS


SORRY... ALL THE ROOMS ARE OCCUPIED! BUT IF YOU LIKE— YOU CAN WAIT FOR THE NEXT TRIP!
THE LAST DAY OF THE DINOSAURS

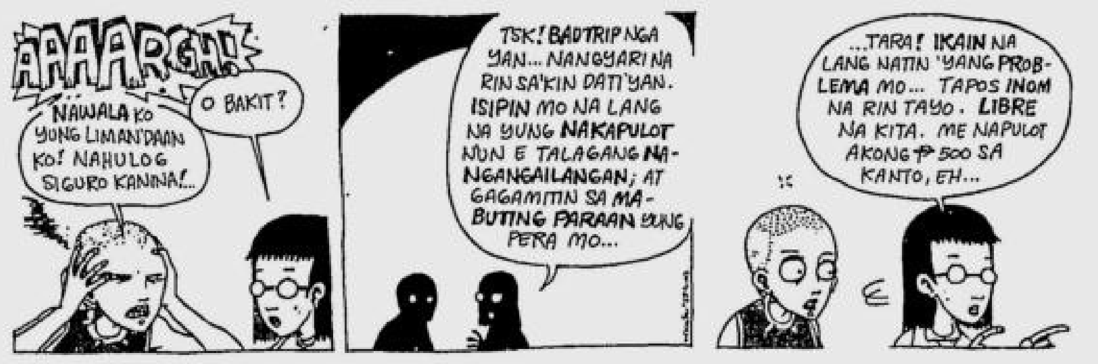
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


WAN' A MONKEY HUG, GANPA?
WHAT'S A MONKEY HUG?
OH...

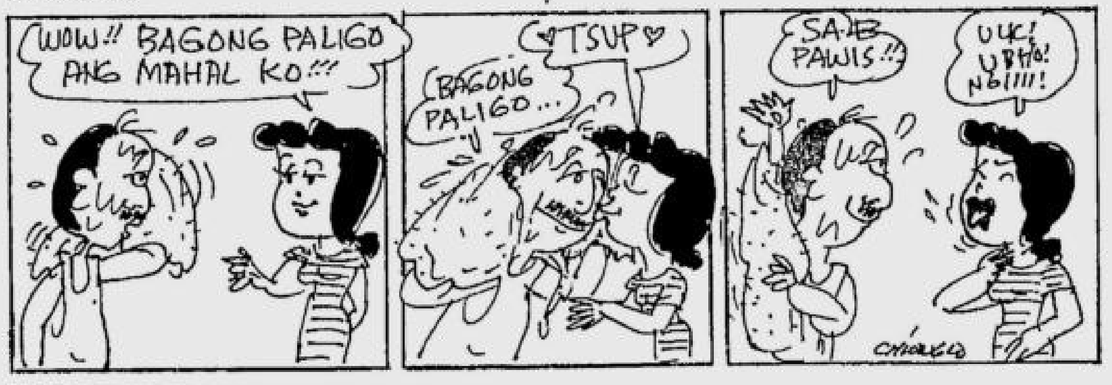
MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


DEAR, ANG SWERTE NG KABATAAN SA PANAHONG ITO...
ANG DALI NILANG MAKAKUHA NG MGA BAGONG BALITA TULAD NG DELIKADONG GMO's SA PAGKAIN PARA MAIWASAN.
OONGA, PERO KAY BUNSOY, MEDYO MASAMA YON.
BAKIT?
E ANG DAMI TULOY NIYANG DAHILAN PARA DI KUMAIN NG GULAY!
J. Tejido
5.03

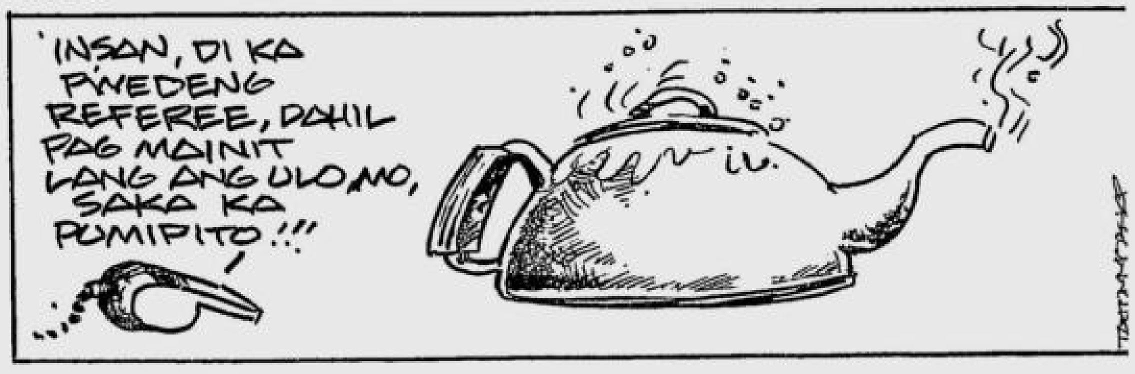
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA

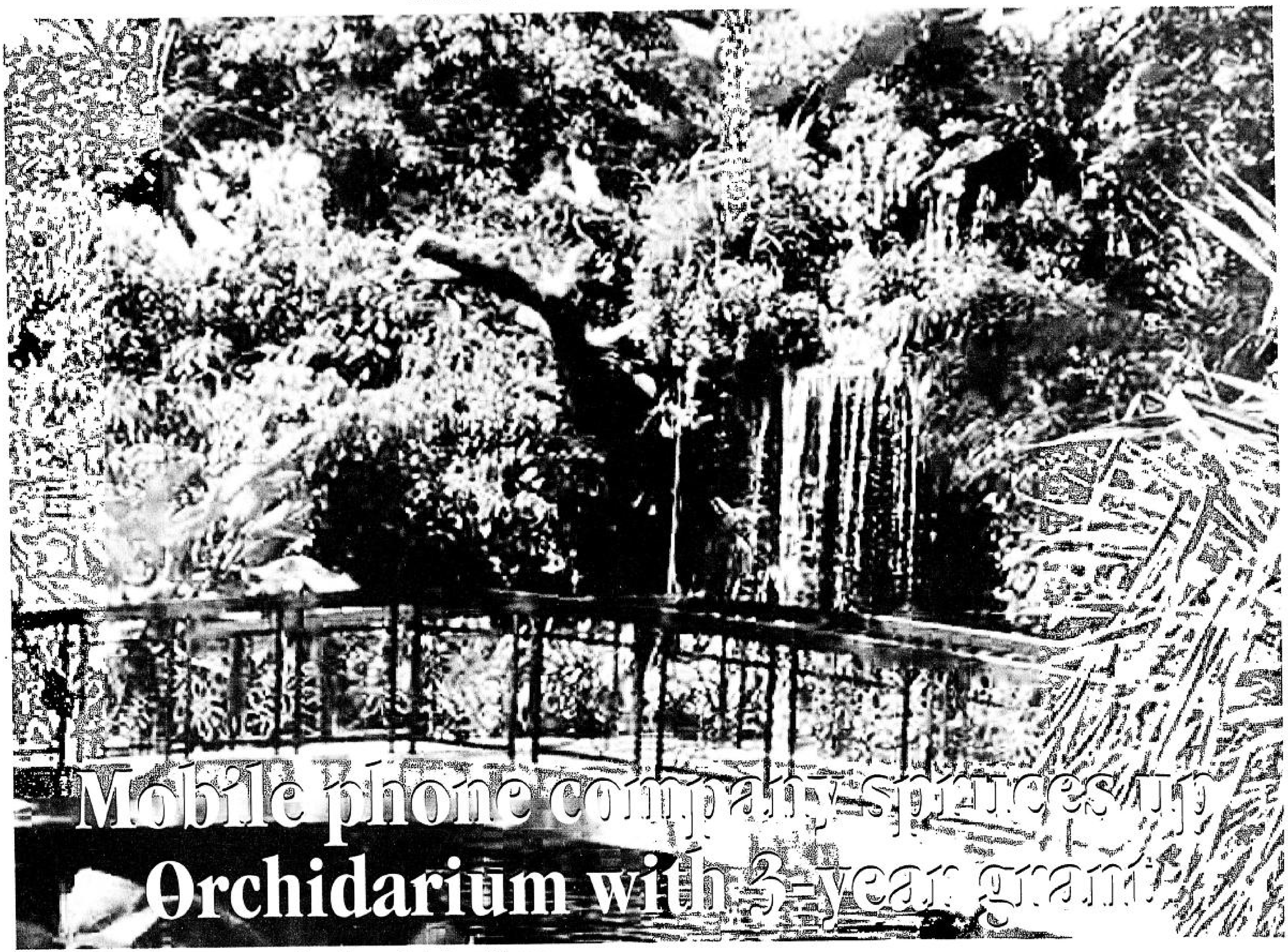

AAAARGH!
NAWALA KO YUNG LIMAN'DAAN KO! NAHULOG SIGURO KANINA!...
O BAKIT?
TSK! BADTRIP NGA YAN... NANGYARI NA RIN SA'KIN DATI'YAN. ISIPIN MO NA LANG NA YUNG NAKAPULOT NUN E TALAGANG NANGANGAILANGAN; AT GAGAMITIN SA MABUTING PARAAN YUNG PERA MO...
...TARA! IKAIN NA LANG NATIN 'YANG PROBLEMA MO... TAPOS INOM NA RIN TAYO. LIBRE NA KITA. ME NAPULOT AKONG ₱500 SA KANTO, EH...

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


WOW!! BAGONG PALIGO ANG MAHAL KO!!!
BAGONG PALIGO...
TSUP
SA-B PAWIS!!!
UUK! UBHO! NGI!!!!
CHIONGLO

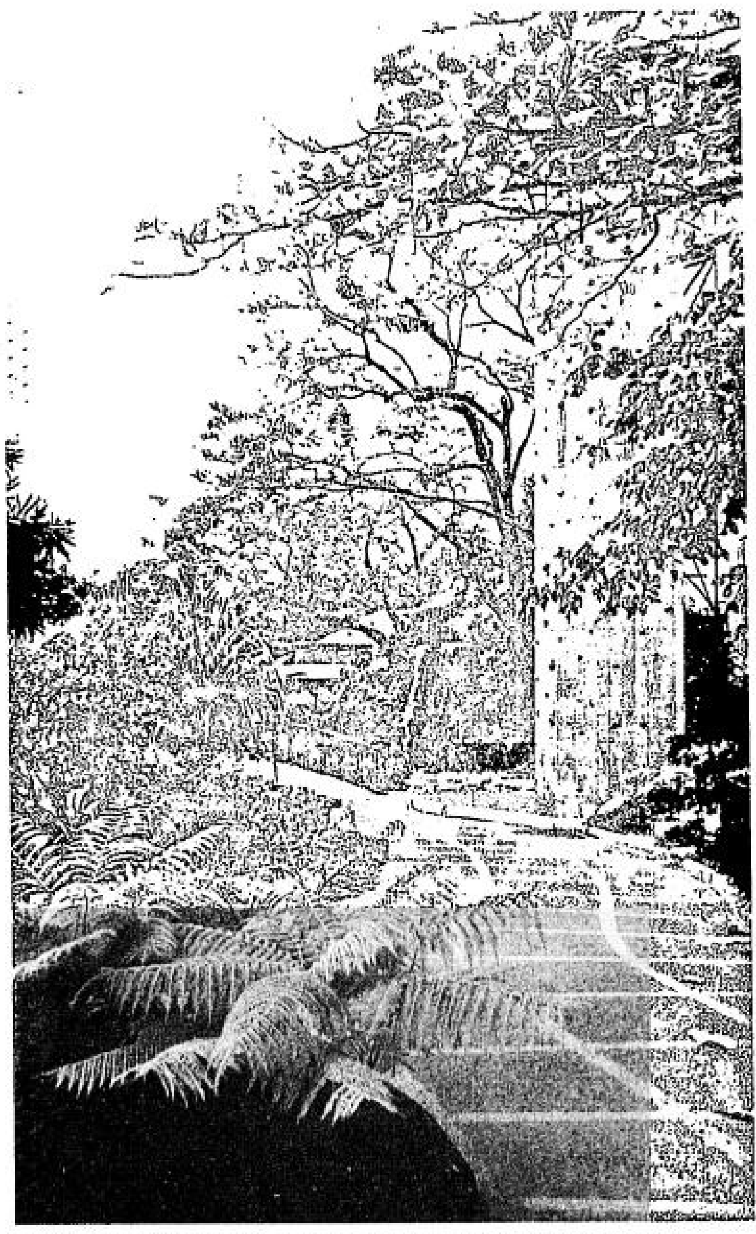
TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


INSAN, DI KA PWEDENG REFEREE, DAHIL PAG MAINIT LANG ANG ULO MO, SAKA KA PUMIPITO!!!



Mobile phone company spruces up Orchidarium with 3-year grant

THE CALM sound of the waterfalls is sure to enchant visitors passing by the mystic lagoon.



TREES and wide variety of plants surround the pathway to the Orchidarium. Also shown is the park's wall-climbing facility.

IN THE HEART of Manila lies an alternative getaway filled with hard-to-find orchids, a refreshing waterfall, a challenging wall climbing facility, a soothing reflexology walk and colorful butterflies. It's the Orchidarium and Butterfly Pavilion, located at the Teodoro F. Valencia Circle, Rizal Park in Manila.

A popular venue for weddings, birthdays and even show-biz location shootings, the Orchidarium is a mini-Eden tucked away from the busy city life of the metropolis. Here, nature is preserved at its finest, while providing first-time visitors and park regulars with a refreshing—and still educational—respite from the worries of the day.

Mondays with Nokia

Last year, the Orchidarium was the beneficiary of a three-year initiative by mobile phone leader Nokia to enhance the park. A distinct area called the "Nokia Nurtured Zone" is dedicated to preserving the Orchidarium's flora and fauna, and is a venue for educational activities for young kids.

A program called "Mondays with Nokia" is regularly held to teach schoolchildren the value of preserving the environment and one of its most precious resources: water. Last March, some 3,000 visitors embarked on an educational tour of the park, and from this number, a thousand kids participated in the "Mondays with Nokia" program. Most recipients of the program are underprivileged organizations and schools in Metro Manila who are given the rare opportunity to experience the rich and diverse environment of the Philippines via the Orchidarium.

Guided tour

For those raring to check out the Orchidarium, a guided tour of the park will yield these interesting features:

- Reflexology Walk. This pathway of healing stones is part of the Nokia Nurtured Zone. Visitors can strip off their shoes and sandals to walk barefoot and partake of the healing and soothing properties of the reflexology walk.
- Butterfly Pavilion is where hundreds of winged flower-like creatures put on an unrivaled live show of beauty and grandeur. The pavilion showcases how these amazing butterflies evolve from tiny eggs to hungry caterpillars to sleeping pupae before becoming a breathtaking sight in flight.
- Ming's Corner is a charming spot where the Clean and Green Foundation's president and chairperson's treasured plants are on display. Check out former First Lady Ming Ramos' showcase of her flower power.
- Mystic Lagoon. Bait your hooks and fish like the royal sportsman that you always wanted to be. Another option is to feed the exotic fish that teem the park's Exotic Pond.

The Orchidarium also has a wall-climbing facility, a resident playful python, a refreshing rainforest, scented greens, and to cater to your gastronomical desires, try out Lush Life and Garden Bistro restaurant right at the center of the Orchidarium.

Call 527-6376/6378.

STUDENTS at the Butterfly Pavilion observe how butterflies reproduce.

Earth Day recyclables collection event

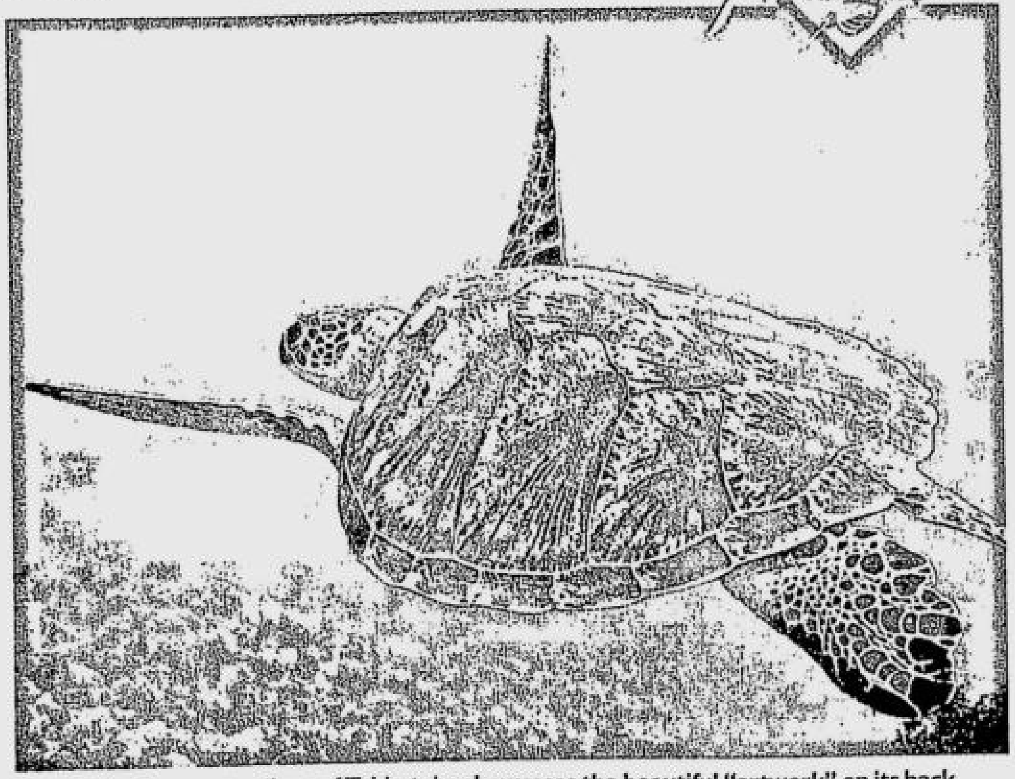
COCA-COLA Bottlers Philippines Inc. (CCBPI) and Save Silang-Santa Rosa River Foundation (S3R2) mark Earth Day with tree-planting at CCBPI Santa Rosa Plant. Planting the tree are manufacturing manager Alvic Yap and quality control head Vladimir Marasigan. Looking on are (from left) Silang LGU's John Marquez, CCBPI's Mike Aclan, Santa Rosa first lady Offie Arcillas, Girl Scouts of the Philippines Santa Rosa district chair Susan Lijuaco and CCBPI's Sonny Valencia.

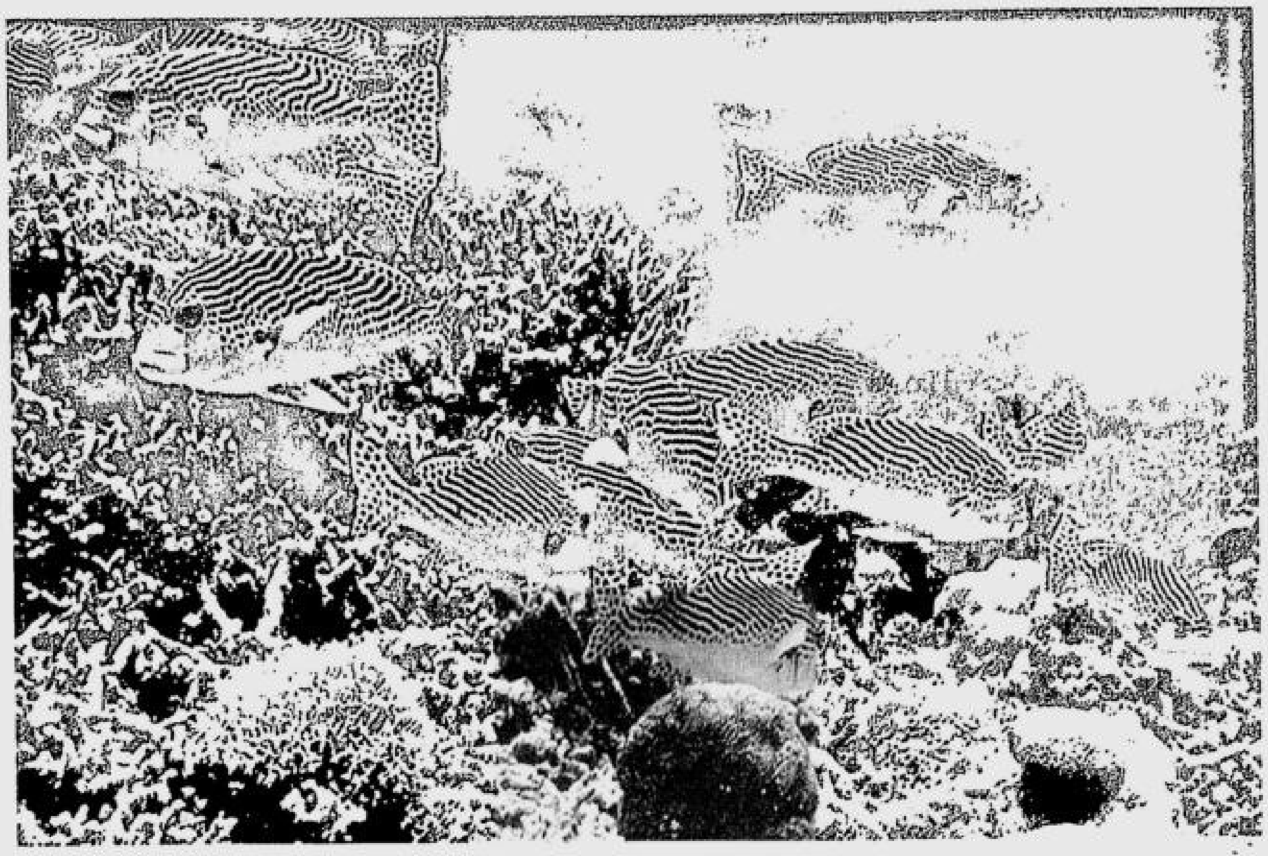
First Philippin
Holdings Corpo

CCBPI'S Mission: PET (Pinoy Environment Team) receives a token of appreciation from the Philippine Business for the Environment (PBE) for participating in Earth Day 2003 Recyclables Collection Event. CCBPI's Sonny Valencia receives the award from Environment Secretary Elisea Gozun and PBE president Leonardo Alejandrino.

RECOVERY CENTER

CCBPI'S Mission: PET joins the Philippine Business for the Environment's Recyclable Collection Event to mark Earth Day. Mission PET recovery centers were put up in ABS-CBN Mother Ignacia, Ayala Glorietta Mall, Power Plant Mall-Rockwell Center and SM City-Davao to buy empty beverage aluminum cans and PET plastic bottles.





ONE of the famous *pawikans* of Tubbataha showcases the beautiful "artwork" on its back (top). Tubbataha won't be the same without these brightly colored sweet lips curiously gazing at passing divers (right).

Hope springs eternal in Tubbataha

Concerned groups bring life back to troubled reef

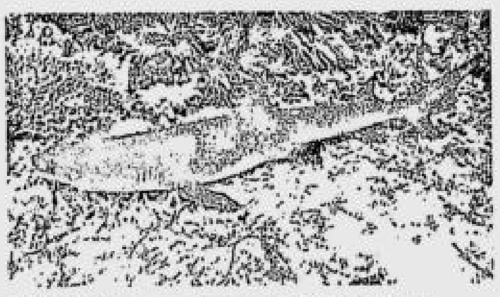
Text and photos by Cora Guidote
Contributor

WHILE talk of war in Iraq and SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) have wreaked havoc and despair in many parts of the world, renewed hope springs at a giant Philippine reef called Tubbataha.

Marine life thrives in this 33,200-hectare marine and bird sanctuary, a World Heritage Site located in the middle of the Sulu Seas between the islands of Palawan and the Visayas.

Thanks to conservationists, research groups, local and provincial government units and diving operators and enthusiasts, efforts and resources are being directed toward preserving and bringing life back to Tubbataha and other formerly devastated parts of the Philippines' diving frontier.

It was my third six-day, live-aboard trip to this diving paradise in a span of seven years. What I saw during my first trip was much less appealing, although back then, it was already quite an experience.



A SHARK lies on the reef beside a coral garden.

Up close and personal

To begin with, I didn't really expect much. To my pleasant surprise, diving very early in the morning into the waters of Tubbataha presented one spectacular photo opportunity after another for a photo aficionado like myself. I got up close and personal with large sea turtles (*pawikan*), reef sharks, three-foot tunas, giant trevallies (*talakitok*), schools of jacks and barracudas. Occasionally, we had encounters with rare species of rays such as the manta, marble and porcupine rays.

A common sight as you swim along the walls of Tubbataha are schools of surgeon fish (*labahita*) and snappers (*maya-maya*) cascading down the deep, coral-adorned walls of Jessie Beazley, Black Rock and North Tubbataha, all dive areas. This time, however, the fish have grown in size and there just seem to be more of them.

The many schools of fusiliers (*dalagang bukid*) in Jessie Beazley, displaying their brilliant colors of yellow and blue, swim past you in long rows, making a drift dive along the reef more akin to watching a Discovery Channel documentary.

The corals on top of the reef have also grown back, many of which were bleached and destroyed by the El Niño phenomenon in 1998. They are now in full technicolor bloom, in varied shapes and sizes, inhabited by just as brightly colored reef fishes such as anthias, parrot fish, sweet lips, fusiliers, moray eels, trigger fish (notorious for their aggressive behavior when nesting) and octopus, among others.

The walls of the reef are just as lovely as I remembered, yet somehow, even more attractive now because the fan corals branch out more, some in very striking purple, yellow and orange, others in soft white and green.

That's underwater, by the way.

Up on the boat, we had other encounters. Our meals on deck were often distracted by large schools of dolphins cruising several meters away from our boat, with one or two of them occasionally jumping out of the water, proudly displaying a triple twist before diving back down.

Boobies also flew by and sometimes tried to land on the roof deck. These are the white-faced, white-breasted migratory black birds that lay their eggs at a sanctuary aptly called Bird Islet in North Tubbataha. Humans are not allowed on this tiny piece of land, because boobies by the thousands (and also turtles, by the way), lay their eggs right on the beach.

Spectacular sunset

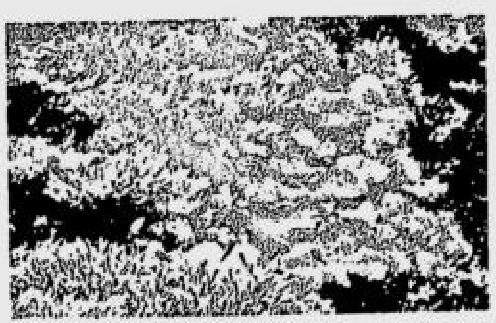
Now I don't know if other dive operators do this, but ours gave us a treat on our last day. We were served dinner on a sand bar in Jessie Beazley reef. During high tide, all you see of this island is a 3-meter circumference of coral rubble. During low tide, however, more of the island is exposed, allowing a small group to set up a few tables and chairs and enjoy one of the most spectacular sunsets one could ever imagine.

As soon as the streaks of sunlight disappeared on the horizon, the cloudless sky was immediately transformed into a dome brightened by an awesome display of stars and galaxies. It was just amazing!

As we went back to the boat, everybody was careful not to leave any trash behind to avoid spoiling such pristine surroundings. For certain, though, we took with us sweet memories and lot of photos.

Nothing could've capped that trip better. It makes you experience Easter in a marvelous way, a chance to thank God for this opportunity to gawk at His magnificent creation.

"Build thee more stately mansions, Oh my soul," said Oliver Wendell Holmes in "The Chambered Nautilus." Nothing could've been more apt for what was, in the end, our highly spiritual communion with nature.



THIS is how lush, untouched coral garden should look like.

make-up:none
hairstyling:none
accesories:none
beauty secret: BETHEL FACIAL CENTER
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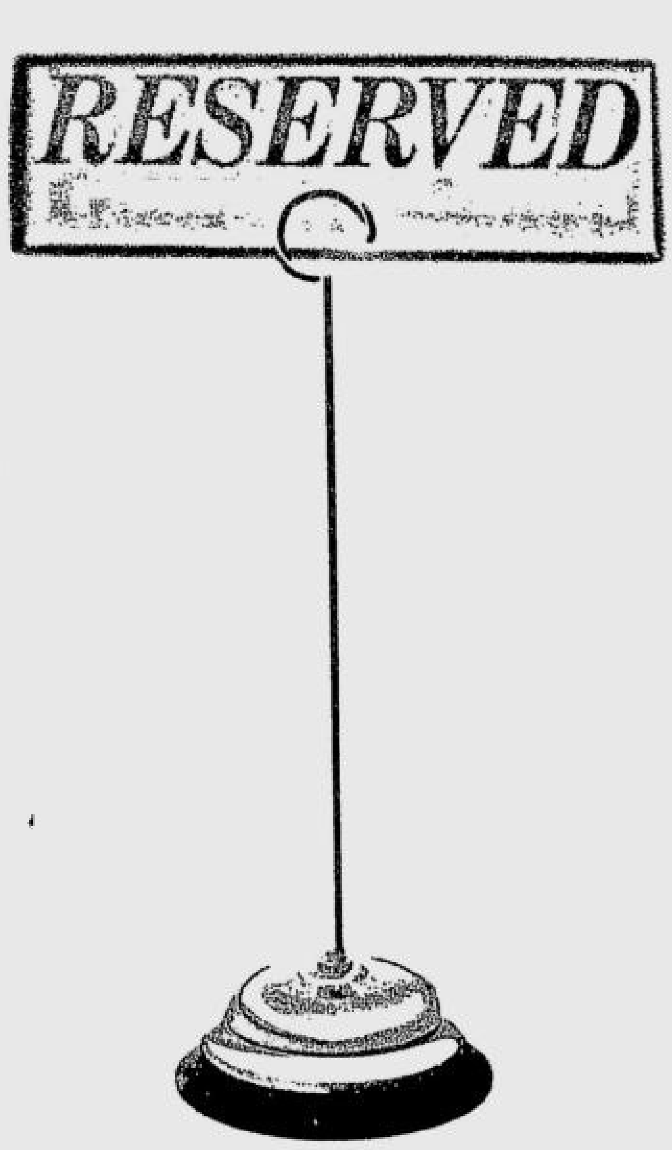

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